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DRYDEN'S POEMS.  
 Vol. III forming part of  
 Cooke's Pocket Edition of  
 the Original & Complete Works of  
 SELECT BRITISH POETS  
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THE  
POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
JOHN DRYDEN.  
WITH  
THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

---

Cooke's Edition.

---

Hear how Timotheus' vary'd lays surprise,  
And bid alternate passions fall and rise---  
The pow'r of music all our hearts allow,  
And what Timotheus was is DRYDEN now. *Pope.*

Behold where DRYDEN's less presumptuous car  
Wide o'er the fields of glory bear  
Two courfers of ethereal race  
With necks in thunder cloath'd, and long-resounding pace.  
Hark, his hands the lyre explore,  
Bright-ey'd Fancy hov'ring o'er,  
Scatters from her pictur'd urn  
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.  
But ah! 'tis heard no more--- *Gray.*

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VOL. III.

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EMBELLISHED WITH SUPERB ENGRAVINGS.

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[1798]



**Eigentum  
der Stadt Bamberg**

**Gruppe:**

**Zahl:**





THE  
POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
JOHN DRYDEN.

CONTAINING HIS

TRANSLATIONS,  
PALAMON AND ARCITE,  
THE COCK AND THE FOX,  
THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF,

THE WIFE OF BATH's TAI  
SIGISMONDA AND GUISCAI  
THEODORE AND HONORIA,  
CYMON AND IPHIGENIA,

&c. &c. &c.

---

But see where artful DRYDEN next appears,  
Grown old in rhyme, but charming e'en in years!  
Great DRYDEN next! whose tuneful Muse affords  
The sweetest numbers and the fittest words.  
Whether in comic sounds or tragic airs  
She forms her voice, she moves our smiles or tears,  
If satire or heroic strains she writes,  
Her hero pleases, and her satire bites.  
From her no harsh unartful numbers fall;  
She wears all dresses, and she charms in all.

*Addison,*

---

London:

PRINTED AND EMBELLISHED

Under the Direction of

C. COOKE.







# AMARYLLIS :

OR THE THIRD IDYLLIUM OF THEOCRITUS,

PARAPHRASED.

**T**O Amaryllis love compels my way,  
 My browsing goats upon the mountains stray :  
 O Tityrus, tend them well, and see them fed  
 In pastures fresh, and to their watering led ;  
 And 'ware the ridgling with his budding head. 5  
 Ah, beauteous nymph ! can you forget your love,  
 The conscious grottos, and the shady grove ;  
 Where stretch'd at ease your tender limbs were laid,  
 Your nameless beauties nakedly display'd ?  
 Then I was call'd your darling, your desire, 10  
 With kisses such as set my soul on fire :  
 But you are chang'd, yet I am still the same ;  
 My heart maintains for both a double flame ;  
 Griev'd, but unmov'd, and patient of your scorn ;  
 So faithful I, and you so much forsworn !  
 I die, and death will finish all my pain ;  
 Yet, e'er I die, behold me once again :  
 Am I so much deform'd, so chang'd of late ?  
 What partial judges are our love and hate !  
 Ten wildings have I gather'd for my dear ; 20  
 How ruddy, like your lips, their streaks appear !  
 Far off your view'd them with a longing eye  
 Upon the topmost branch (the tree was high) :  
 Yet nimbly up, from bough to bough I swerv'd,  
 And for to-morrow have ten more reserv'd. 25  
 Look on me kindly, and some pity shew,  
 Or give me leave at least to look on you.  
 Some God transform me by his heavenly power  
 Ev'n to a bee to buzz within your bow'r,  
 The winding ivy chaplet to invade, 30  
 And folded fern that your fair forehead shade.  
 Now to my cost the force of love I find ;  
 The heavy hand it bears on human-kind.  
 The milk of tigers was his infant food,  
 Taught from his tender years the taste of blood ; 35  
 His brother whelps and he ran wild about the wood.



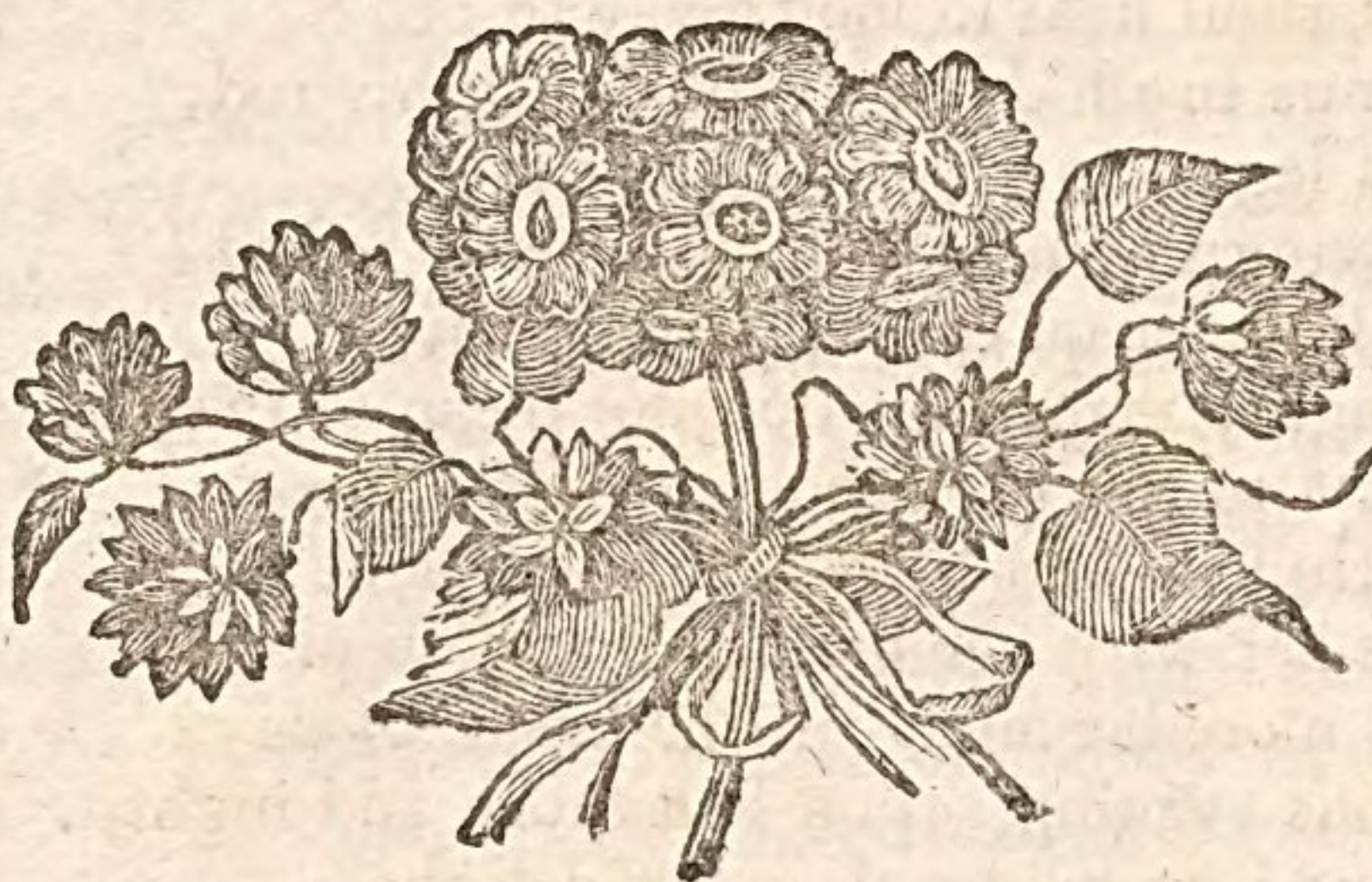
Ah, nymph, train'd up in his tyrannic court,  
To make the sufferings of your slaves your sport!  
Unheeded ruin! treacherous delight!  
O polish'd hardneſs, ſoften'd to the ſight! 40  
Whoſe radiant eyes your ebon brows adorn,  
Like midnight thoſe, and theſe like break of morn!  
Smile once again, revive me with your charms;  
And let me die contented in your arms.  
I would not ask to live another day, 45  
Might I but ſweetly kiſs my ſoul away.  
Ah, why am I from empty joys debarr'd?  
For kiſſes are but empty when compar'd.  
I rave, and in my raging fit ſhall tear  
The garland, which I wove for you to wear, 50  
Of paſſley, with a wreath of ivy bound,  
And border'd with a roſy edging round.  
What pangs I feel, unpity'd and unheard!  
Since I muſt die, why is my fate deferr'd!  
I ſtrip my body of my ſhepherd's frock: 55  
Behold that dreadful downfall of a rock,  
Where yon old fiſher views the waves from high!  
'Tis that convenient leap I mean to try.  
You would be pleas'd to ſee me plunge to ſhore,  
But better pleas'd if I ſhould riſe no more. 60  
I might have read my fortune long ago,  
When, ſeeking my ſucceſs in love to know,  
I try'd th' infallible prophetic way,  
A poppy leaf upon my palm to lay:  
I ſtruck, and yet no lucky crack did follow; 65  
Yet I ſtruck hard, and yet the leaf lay hollow:  
And which was worſe, if any worſe could prove,  
The withering leaf foreſhew'd your withering love.  
Yet farther, (ah, how far a lover dares!)  
My laſt recourſe I had to ſieve and ſheers; 70  
And told the witch Agreo my diſeaſe:  
Agreo, that in harveſt us'd to leaſe:  
But harveſt done, to chare-work did aſpire;  
Meat, drink, and two-pence, was her daily hire.



To work she went, her charms she mutter'd o'er, 75  
 And yet the resty sieve wagg'd ne'er the more;  
 I wept for woe, the testy beldame swore,  
 And, foaming with her God, foretold my fate;  
 That I was doom'd to love, and you to hate.  
 A milk-white goat for you I did provide; 80  
 Two milk-white kids ran frisking by her side,  
 For which the nut-brown lass, Erithacis,  
 Full often offer'd many a savoury kiss.  
 Her's they shall be, since you refuse the price:  
 What madman would o'erstand his market twice! 85  
 My right eye itches, some good luck is near,  
 Perhaps my Amaryllis may appear;  
 I'll set up such a note as she shall hear.  
 What nymph but my melodious voice would move?  
 She must be flint, if she refuse my love. 90  
 Hippomenes, who ran with noble strife  
 To win his lady, or to lose his life,  
 (What shift some men will make to get a wife!)  
 Threw down a golden apple in her way;  
 For all her haste she could not choose but stay; 95  
 Renown said, run; the glitt'ring bribe cry'd hold;  
 The man might have been hang'd but for his gold.  
 Yet some suppose 'twas love (some few indeed)  
 That stopt the fatal fury of her speed:  
 She saw, she sigh'd; her nimble feet refuse 100  
 Their wonted speed, and she took pains to lose.  
 A prophet some, and some a poet cry,  
 (No matter which, so neither of them lie)  
 From steepy Othrys' top to Pylus drove  
 His herd; and for his pains enjoy'd his love: 105  
 If such another wager should be laid,  
 I'll find the man, if you can find the maid.  
 Why name I men, when love extended finds  
 His pow'r on high, and on celestial minds;  
 Venus the shepherd's homely habit took, 110  
 And manag'd something else besides the crook;  
 Nay, when Adonis dy'd, was heard to roar,  
 And never from her heart forgave the boar.



How blest was fair Endymion with his Moon,  
Who sleeps on Latmos' top from night to noon! 115  
What Jason from Medea's love possest,  
You shall not hear, but know 'tis like the rest.  
My aching head can scarce support the pain;  
This cursed love will surely turn my brain:  
Feel how it shoots, and yet you take no pity; 120  
Nay then 'tis time to end my doleful ditty.  
A clammy sweat does o'er my temples creep;  
My heavy eyes are urg'd with iron sleep:  
I lay me down to gasp my latest breath,  
The wolves will get a breakfast by my death; 125  
Yet scarce enough their hunger to supply,  
For love has made me carrion e'er I die. 127





THE EPITHALAMIUM OF  
HELEN AND MENELAUS.

FROM THE EIGHTEENTH IDYLLIUM OF THEOCRITUS.

**T**WELVE Spartan virgins, noble, young, and fair,  
 With violet wreaths adorn'd their flowing hair;  
 And to the pompous palace did resort,  
 Where Menelaus kept his royal court.  
 There, hand in hand, a comely choir they led; 5  
 To sing a blessing to his nuptial bed, [bespread.  
 With curious needles wrought, and painted flowers  
 Jove's beauteous daughter now his bride must be,  
 And Jove himself was less a god than he: 9  
 For this their artful hands instruct the lute to sound,  
 Their feet assist their hands, and justly beat the ground.  
 This was their song: Why, happy bridegroom, why,  
 Ere yet the stars are kindled in the sky,  
 Ere twilight shades, or evening dew's are shed,  
 Why dost thou steal so soon away to bed? 15  
 Has Somnus brush'd thy eyelids with his rod,  
 Or do thy legs refuse to bear their load,  
 With flowing bowls of a more generous God?  
 If gentle slumber on thy temples creep,  
 (But, naughty man, thou dost not mean to sleep) 20  
 Betake thee to thy bed, thou drowzy drone,  
 Sleep by thyself, and leave thy bride alone:  
 Go, leave her with her maiden mates to play,  
 At sports more harmless till the break of day:  
 Give us this evening; thou hast morn and night, 25  
 And all the year before thee, for delight.  
 O happy youth; to thee, among the crowd,  
 Of rival princes, Cupid ineez'd aloud;  
 And every lucky omen sent before,  
 To meet thee landing on the Spartan shore. 30  
 Of all our heroes thou canst boast alone,  
 That Jove, whene'er he thunders, calls thee son:  
 Betwixt two sheets thou shalt enjoy her bare,  
 With whom no Grecian virgin can compare;  
 So soft, so sweet, so balmy, and so fair. 35



A boy, like thee, would make a kingly line :  
But oh, a girl like her must be divine.  
Her equals, we, in years, but not in face,  
Twelvescore viragoes of the Spartan race,  
While naked to Eurota's banks we bend, 40  
And there in manly exercise contend,  
When she appears, are all eclips'd and lost,  
And hide the beauties that we made our boast.  
So, when the night and winter disappear,  
The purple morning, rising with the year, 45  
Salutes the spring, as her celestial eyes  
Adorn the world, and brighten all the skies :  
So beauteous Helen shines among the rest,  
Tall, slender, straight, with all the graces blest.  
As pines the mountains, or as fields the corn, 50  
Or as Thessalian steeds the race adorn ;  
So rosy-colour'd Helen is the pride  
Of Lacedæmon, and of Greece beside.  
Like her no nymph can willing osiers bend,  
In basket-works, which painted streaks commend : 55  
With Pallas in the loom she may contend.  
But none, ah ! none can animate the lyre,  
And the mute strings with vocal souls inspire ;  
Whether the learn'd Minerva be her theme,  
Or chaste Diana bathing in a stream : 60  
None can record their heavenly praise so well  
As Helen, in whose eyes ten thousand Cupids dwell,  
O fair, O graceful ! yet with maids enroll'd,  
But whom to-morrow's sun a matron shall behold ;  
Yet ere to-morrow's sun shall shew his head, 65  
The dewy paths of meadows we will tread,  
For crowns and chaplets to adorn thy head.  
Where all shall weep and wish for thy return,  
As bleating lambs their absent mother mourn.  
Our noblest maids shall to thy name bequeath 70  
The boughs of Lotos, form'd into a wreath.  
This monument, thy maiden beauty's due,  
High on a plane-tree shall be hung to view :  
On the smooth rind the passenger shall see  
Thy name engrav'd, and worship Helen's tree : 75



Balm, from a silver box distill'd around,  
Shall all bedew the roots, and scent the sacred ground.  
The balm, 'tis true, can aged plants prolong,  
But Helen's name will keep it ever young.  
Hail bride, hail bridegroom, son-in-law to Jove ! 80  
With fruitful joys Latona blest your love ;  
Let Venus furnish you with full desires,  
Add vigour to your wills, and fuel to your fires ;  
Almighty Jove augment your wealthy store,  
Give much to you, and to his grandsons more. 85  
From generous loins a generous race will spring,  
Each girl, like her, a queen ; each boy, like you, a king.  
Now sleep, if sleep you can ; but while you rest,  
Sleep close, with folded arms, and breast to breast,  
Rise in the morn, but oh ! before you rise, 90  
Forget not to perform your morning sacrifice.  
We will be with you ere the crowing cock  
Salutes the light, and struts before his feather'd flock.  
Hymen, oh Hymen, to thy triumphs run,  
And view the mighty spoils thou hast in battle won. 96





THE  
DESPAIRING LOVER.

FROM THE  
TWENTY-THIRD IDYLLIUM OF THEOCRITUS.

**W**ITH inauspicious love, a wretched swain  
 Pursued the fairest nymph of all the plain ;  
 Fairest indeed, but prouder far than fair,  
 She plung'd him hopeless in a deep despair :  
 Her heavenly form too haughtily she priz'd, 5  
 His person hated, and his gift's despis'd ;  
 Nor knew the force of Cupid's cruel darts,  
 Nor fear'd his awful power on human hearts ;  
 But either from her hopeless lover fled,  
 Or with disdainful glances shot him dead. 10  
 No kiss, no look, to cheer the drooping boy ;  
 No word she spoke, she scorn'd ev'n to deny.  
 But as a hunted panther casts about  
 Her glaring eyes, and pricks her listening ears to  
 scout,  
 So she, to shun his toils, her cares employ'd, 15  
 And fiercely in her savage freedom joy'd.  
 Her mouth she writh'd, her forehead taught to frown,  
 Her eyes to sparkle fires to love unknown :  
 Her fallow cheeks her envious mind did shew,  
 And every feature spoke aloud the curstness of a shrew,  
 Yet could not he his obvious fate escape : 21  
 His love still dress'd her in a pleasing shape ;  
 And every sullen frown and bitter scorn,  
 But fann'd the fuel that too fast did burn.  
 Long time, unequal to his mighty pain, 25  
 He strove to curb it, but he strove in vain :  
 At last his woes broke out, and begg'd relief  
 With tears, the dumb petitioners of grief :  
 With tears so tender as adorn'd his love,  
 And any heart but only hers would move. 30  
 Trembling before her bolted doors he stood,  
 And there pour'd out th' unprofitable flood :



Staring his eyes, and haggard was his look ;  
 Then, kissing first the threshold, thus he spoke :  
 Ah, nymph, more cruel than of human race ! 35  
 Thy tigress heart belies thy angel face :  
 Too well thou shew'dst thy pedigree from stone :  
 Thy grandame's was the first by Pyrrha thrown :  
 Unworthy thou to be so long desir'd :  
 But so my love, and so my fate requir'd. 40  
 I beg not now (for 'tis in vain) to live ;  
 But take this gift, the last that I can give.  
 This friendly cord shall soon decide the strife  
 Betwixt my lingering love and loathsome life :  
 This moment puts an end to all my pain ; 45  
 I shall no more despair, nor thou disdain.  
 Farewel, ungrateful and unkind ! I go  
 Condemn'd by thee to those sad shades below.  
 I go th' extremest remedy to prove,  
 To drink oblivion, and to drench my love : 50  
 There happily to lose my long desires :  
 But ah ! what draught so deep to quench my fires ?  
 Farewel, ye never opening gates, ye stones,  
 And threshold guilty of my midnight moans.  
 What I have suffer'd here, ye know too well ; 55  
 What I shall do, the Gods and I can tell.  
 The rose is fragrant, but it fades in time ;  
 The violet sweet, but quickly past the prime ;  
 White lilies hang their heads, and soon decay,  
 And whiter snow in minutes melts away ; 60  
 Such is your blooming youth, and withering so :  
 The time will come, it will, when you shall know  
 The rage of love ; your haughty heart shall burn  
 In flames like mine, and meet a like return.  
 Obdurate as you are, oh ! hear at least 65  
 My dying prayers, and grant my last request.  
 When first you ope your doors, and passing by  
 The sad ill-omen'd object meets your eye,  
 Think it not lost, a moment if you stay ;  
 The breathless wretch, so made by you, survey : 70



Some cruel pleasure will from thence arise.  
 To view the mighty ravage of your eyes.  
 I wish (but oh! my wish is vain, I fear)  
 The kind oblation of a falling tear:  
 Then loose the knot, and take me from the place, 75  
 And spread your mantle o'er my grizly face;  
 Upon my livid lips bestow a kiss:  
 O envy not the dead; they feel not blifs!  
 Nor fear your kisses can restore my breath;  
 Ev'n you are not more pityless than death. 80  
 Then for my corpse a homely grave provide,  
 Which love and me from public scorn may hide.  
 Thrice call upon my name, thrice beat your breast,  
 And hail me thrice to everlasting rest:  
 Last, let my tomb this sad inscription bear: 85  
 A wretch, whom love has kill'd, lies buried here:  
 O passengers, Aminta's eyes beware.

Thus having said, and furious with his love,  
 He heav'd with more than human force to move  
 A weighty stone (the labour of a team) 90  
 And rais'd from thence he reach'd the neighbouring  
 beam:

Around its bulk a sliding knot he throws,  
 And fitted to his neck the fatal noose;  
 Then spurning backward, took a swing, till death  
 Crept up, and stopp'd the passage of his breath. 95  
 The bounce burst ope the door; the scornful fair  
 Relentless look'd, and saw him beat his quivering  
 feet in air:

Nor wept his fate, nor cast a pitying eye,  
 Nor took him down, but brush'd regardless by:  
 And as she pass'd, her chance or fate was such, 100  
 Her garments touch'd the dead, polluted by: he  
 touch:

Next to the dance, thence to the bath did move;  
 The bath was sacred to the god of love:  
 Whose injur'd image, with a wrathful eye,  
 Stood threatening from a pedestal on high: 105



Nodding awhile, and watchful of his blow,  
He fell, and falling, crush'd th' ungrateful nymph  
below :

Her gushing blood the pavement all besmear'd :  
And this her last expiring voice was heard :  
Lovers, farewell ; revenge has reach'd my scorn :  
Thus warn'd, be wise, and love for love return. III





## THE FIRST BOOK OF HOMER'S ILIAS.

## The Argument.

Chryses, priest of Apollo, brings presents to the Grecian princes, to ransom his daughter Chryseis, who was prisoner in the fleet. Agamemnon, the general, whose captive and mistress the young lady was, refuses to deliver, threatens the venerable old man, and dismisses him with contumely. The priest craves vengeance of his God; who sends a plague among the Greeks: which occasions Achilles, their great champion, to summon a council of the chief officers; he encourages Calchas, the high priest and prophet, to tell the reason, why the Gods were so much incensed against them. Calchas is fearful of provoking Agamemnon, till Achilles engages to protect him: then, emboldened by the hero, he accuses the general as the cause of all, by detaining the fair captive, and refusing the presents offered for her ransom. By this proceeding, Agamemnon is obliged, against his will, to restore Chryseis, with gifts, that he might appease the wrath of Phœbus; but, at the same time, to revenge himself on Achilles, sends to seize his slave Briseis. Achilles, thus affronted, complains to his mother Thetis; and begs her to revenge his injury, not only on the general, but on all the army, by giving victory to the Trojans, till the ungrateful king became sensible of his injustice. At the same time, he retires from the camp into his ships, and withdraws his aid from his countrymen. Thetis prefers her son's petition to Jupiter, who grants her suit. Juno suspects her errand, and quarrels with her husband for his grant; till Vulcan reconciles his parents with a bowl of nectar, and sends them peaceably to bed.

**T**HE wrath of Peleus' son, O Muse, resound;  
 Whose dire effects the Grecian army found,  
 And many a hero, king, and hardy knight,  
 Were sent, in early youth, to shades of night:  
 Their limbs a prey to dogs and vultures made: 5  
 So was the sov'reign will of Jove obey'd:  
 From that ill omen'd hour when strife begun,  
 Betwixt Atrides' great, and Thetis' godlike son.

What Pow'r provok'd, and for what cause relate,  
 Sow'd, in their breasts, the seeds of stern debate: 10  
 Jove's and Latona's son his wrath express'd,  
 In vengeance of his violated priest,  
 Against the king of men; who, swoln with pride,  
 Refus'd his presents, and his pray'rs deny'd.  
 For this the God a swift contagion spread 15  
 Amid the camp, where heaps on heaps lay dead.

For venerable Chryses came to buy,  
 With gold and gifts of price, his daughter's liberty.  
 Suppliant before the Grecian chiefs he stood;  
 Awful, and arm'd with ensigns of his God: 20  
 Bare was his hoary head; one holy hand  
 Held forth his laurel crown, and one his sceptre of  
 command.



His suit was common ; but above the rest,  
To both the brother princes thus address'd :

Ye sons of Atreus, and ye Grecian pow'rs, 25  
So may the Gods who dwell in heav'nly bowers  
Succeed your siege, accord the vows you make,  
And give you Troy's imperial town to take ;  
So, by their happy conduct may you come,  
With conquest back to your sweet native home ; 30  
As you receive the ransom which I bring  
(Respecting Jove and the far-shooting king,)  
And break my daughter's bonds, at my desire ;  
And glad with her return her grieving fire.

With shouts of loud acclaim, the Greeks decree 35  
To take the gifts, to set the damsel free.  
The king of men alone with fury burn'd ;  
And, haughty, these opprobrious words return'd :  
Hence, holy dotard, and avoid my sight,  
Ere evil intercept thy tardy flight : 40  
Nor dare to tread this interdicted strand,  
Lest not that idle sceptre in thy hand,  
Nor thy God's crown, my vow'd revenge withstand.  
Hence, on thy life : the captive maid is mine ;  
Whom not for price or prayers I will resign : 45  
Mine she shall be, till creeping age and time  
Her bloom have wither'd, and consum'd her prime.  
Till then my royal bed she shall attend,  
And, having first adorn'd it, late ascend :  
This, for the night ; by day, the web and loom, 50  
And homely household-task, shall be her doom,  
Far from thy lov'd embrace, and her sweet native home.  
He said : the helpless priest reply'd no more ;  
But sped his steps along the hoarse resounding shore ;  
Silent he fled ; secure at length he stood, 55  
Devoutly curs'd his foes, and thus invok'd his god :

O source of sacred light, attend my prayer,  
God with the silver bow and golden hair !  
Whom Chrysa, Cilla, Tenedos, obeys,  
And whose broad eye their happy soil surveys ; 60  
If, Smintheus, I have pour'd before thy shrine  
The blood of oxen, goats, and ruddy wine,



And larded thighs on loaded altars laid,  
 Hear, and my just revenge propitious aid.  
 Pierce the proud Greeks, and with thy shafts attest  
 How much thy power is injur'd in thy priest. 66

He pray'd, and Pœcebus, hearing, urg'd his flight,  
 With fury kindled, from Olympus' height;  
 His quiver o'er his ample shoulders threw;  
 His bow twang'd, and his arrows rattled as they flew.  
 Black as a stormy night, he rang'd around 71

The tents, and compass'd the devoted ground.  
 Then with full force his deadly bow he bent,  
 And feather'd fates among the mules and sumpters  
 Th' essay of rage on faithful dogs the next; [sent :  
 And last in human hearts his arrows fix'd. 76

The God nine days the Greeks at rovers kill'd;  
 Nine days the camp with fun'ral fires was fill'd;  
 The tenth Achilles, by the queen's command,  
 Who bears heav'n's awful sceptre in her hand, 80  
 A council summon'd: for the goddesses griev'd  
 Her favour'd host should perish unreliev'd.

The kings assembled, soon their chief inclose;  
 Then from his seat the goddess-born arose,  
 And thus undaunted spoke. What now remains, 85  
 But that once more we tempt the wat'ry plains,  
 And, wand'ring homeward, seek our safety hence,  
 In flight at least, if we can find defence?  
 Such woes at once encompass us about,  
 The plague within the camp, the sword without, 90  
 Consult, O king, the prophets of th' event:  
 And whence these ills, and what the Gods intent,  
 Let them by dreams explore, for dreams from Jove  
 are sent.

What want of offer'd victims, what offence  
 In fact committed, could the sun incense, 95  
 To deal his deadly shafts? What may remove  
 His settled hate, and reconcile his love?  
 That he may look propitious on our toils;  
 And hungry graves no more be glutted with our spoils.

Thus to the king of men the hero spoke, 100  
 Then Calchas the desir'd occasion took;



Calchas the sacred seer, who had in view  
Things present and the past ; and things to come  
foreknew ;

Supreme of augurs, who, by Phœbus taught,  
The Grecian powers to Troy's destruction brought.  
Skill'd in the secret causes of their woes, 106

The reverend priest in graceful act arose :

And thus bespoke Pelides : Care of Jove,

Favour'd of all th' immortal powers above ;

Wouldst thou the seeds deep-sown of mischief know,

And why provok'd Apollo bends his bow ? 111

Plight first thy faith, inviolably true,

To save me from those ills that may ensue.

For I shall tell ungrateful truths, to those

Whose boundless powers of life and death dispose. 115

And sovereigns, ever jealous of their state,

Forgive not those whom once they mark for hate ;

Ev'n though th' offence they seemingly digest,

Revenge, like embers rak'd, within their breast,

Burst forth in flames ; whose unresisted power 120

Will seize th' unwary wretch, and soon devour.

Such, and no less is he, on whom depends [offends,

The sum of things ; and whom my tongue of force

Secure me then from his foreseen intent,

That what his wrath may doom, thy valour may prevent.

To this the stern Achilles made reply ; 126

Be bold ; and on my plighted faith rely,

To speak what Phœbus has inspir'd thy soul

For common good ; and speak without control.

His godhead I invoke, by him I swear, 130

That while my nostrils draw this vital air,

None shall presume to violate those bands ;

Or touch thy person with unhallow'd hands :

Ev'n not the king of men that all commands.

At this, resum'g heart, the prophet said : 135

Nor hetacomb unslain, nor vows unpaid,

On Greeks, accurs'd, this dire contagion bring,

Or call for vengeance from the bowyer king ;

But he the tyrant, whom none dares resist,

Affronts the godhead in his injur'd priest : 140



He keeps the damsel captive in his chain,  
 And presents are refus'd, and prayers preferr'd in vain.  
 For this th' avenging power employs his darts;  
 And empties all his quiver in our hearts;  
 Thus will persist, relentless in his ire,  
 Till the fair slave be render'd to her fire:  
 And ransom-free restor'd to his abode,  
 With sacrifice to reconcile the god:

145

Then he, perhaps, aton'd by prayer, may cease  
 His vengeance justly vow'd, and give thee peace. 150

Thus having said, he fate: thus answer'd then,  
 Upstarting from his throne, the king of men,  
 His breast with fury fill'd, his eyes with fire;  
 Which rolling round, he shot in sparkles on the fire:  
 Augur of ill, whose tongue was never found  
 Without a priestly curse, or boding sound;  
 For not one bless'd event foretold to me  
 Pass'd through that mouth, or pass'd unwillingly.  
 And now thou dost with lies the throne invade,  
 By practice harden'd in thy slandering trade. 160

Obtending heaven, for what'er ills befall;  
 And sputtering under specious names they gall.  
 Now Phoebus is provok'd, his rights and laws  
 Are in his priest profan'd, and I the cause:  
 Since I detain a slave, my sovereign prize,  
 And sacred gold, your idol-god, despise,  
 I love her well: and well her merits claim,  
 To stand preferr'd before my Grecian dame:  
 Not Clytemnestra's self in beauty's bloom  
 More charm'd, or better ply'd the various loom: 170  
 Mine is the maid; and brought in happy hour,  
 With every household grace adorn'd, to bless my nup-  
 tial bower.

165

Yet shall she be restor'd; since public good,  
 For private int'rest ought not to be withstood,  
 To save th' effusion of my people's blood. 175  
 But right requires, if I resign my own,  
 I should not suffer for your sakes alone;  
 Alone excluded from the prize I gain'd,  
 And by your common suffrage have obtain'd.



The slave without a ransom shall be sent : 180  
It rests for you to make th' equivalent.

To this the fierce Theſſalian prince reply'd :  
O firſt in power, but paſſing all in pride,  
Gripping, and ſtill tenacious of thy hold, [ſoul'd,  
Wouldſt thou the Grecian chiefs, though largely  
Should give the prizes they had gain'd before, 186  
And with their loſs thy ſacrilege reſtore ?

Whate'er by force of arms the ſoldier got,  
Is each his own, by dividend of lot :  
Which to reſume, were both unjuſt and baſe ; 190  
Not to be borne but by a ſervile race.

But this we can : if Saturn's ſon beſtows  
The ſack of Troy, which he by promiſe owes ;  
Then ſhall the conquering Greeks thy loſs reſtore,  
And with large intereſt make th' advantage more. 195

To this Atrides answer'd : Though thy boaſt  
Aſſumes the foremoſt name of all our hoſt,  
Pretend not, mighty man, that what is mine,  
Controll'd by thee, I tamely ſhould reſign.  
Shall I releaſe the prize I gain'd by right, 200  
In taken towns and many a bloody fight,  
While thou detain'ſt Brifeis in thy bands,  
By prieſtly gloſſing on the God's commands ?  
Reſolve on this (a ſhort alternative)

Quit mine, or, in exchange, another give ; 205  
Elſe I, aſſure thy ſoul, by ſovereign right  
Will ſeize thy captive in thy own deſpight.  
Or from ſtout Ajax, or Ulyſſes, bear

What other prize my fancy ſhall prefer :  
Then ſoftly murmur or aloud complain, 210  
Rage as you pleaſe, you ſhall reſiſt in vain.  
But more of this, in proper time and place ;  
To things of greater moment let us paſs.

A ſhip to ſail the ſacred ſeas prepare ;  
Proud in her trim : and put on board the fair, 215  
With ſacrifice and gifts, and all the pomp of prayer.  
The crew well choſen, the command ſhall be  
In Ajax : or if other I decree,  
In Creta's king, or Ithacus, or if I pleaſe in thee :



Most fit thyself to see performed th' intent 220  
 For which my prisoner from my sight is sent ;  
 (Thanks to thy pious care) that Phœbus may relent.  
 At this Achilles roll'd his furious eyes,  
 Fix'd on the king askant ; and thus replies :  
 O, impudent, regardful of thy own, 225  
 Whose thoughts are center'd on thyself alone,  
 Advanc'd to sovereign sway, for better ends  
 Than thus like abject slaves to treat thy friends.  
 What Greek is he, that, urg'd by thy command,  
 Against the Trojan troops will lift his hand ? 230  
 Not I : nor such enforc'd respect I owe ;  
 Nor Pergamus I hate, nor Priam is my foe.  
 What wrong from Troy remote could I sustain,  
 To leave my fruitful soil and happy reign,  
 And plough the furges of the stormy main ? 235  
 Thee, frontless man, we follow'd from afar ;  
 Thy instruments of death, and tools of war.  
 Thine is the triumph, ours the toil alone ; [throne.  
 We bear thee on our backs, and mount thee on the  
 For thee we fall in fight ; for thee redress 240  
 Thy baffled brother ; not the wrongs of Greece.  
 And now thou threaten'st, with unjust decree,  
 To punish thy affronting heav'n, on me.  
 To seize the prize which I so dearly bought ;  
 By common suffrage given, confirm'd by lot. 245  
 Mean match to thine, for still above the rest  
 Thy hook'd rapacious hands usurp the best.  
 Though mine are first in fight, to force the prey ;  
 And last sustain the labours of the day.  
 Nor grudge I thee the much the Grecians give ; 250  
 Nor murmuring take the little I receive.  
 Yet ev'n this little, thou, who wouldst engross  
 The whole, insatiate, envy'st as thy loss.  
 Know, then, for Phthia fix'd is my return :  
 Better at home my ill-paid pains to mourn, 255  
 Than from an equal here sustain the public scorn.  
 The king, whose brows with shining gold were bound,  
 Who saw his throne with scepter'd slaves encom-  
 pass'd round,



Thus answer'd stern: Go, at thy pleasure, go:  
 We need not such a friend, nor fear we such a foe. 260  
 There will not want to follow me in fight:  
 Jove will assist, and Jove assert my right.  
 But thou of all the kings (his care below)  
 Art least at my command, and most my foe.  
 Debates, dissensions, uproars are thy joy; 265  
 Provok'd without offence, and practis'd to destroy.  
 Strength is of brutes, and not thy boast alone;  
 At least 'tis lent from heaven; and not thy own.  
 Fly then, ill-manner'd, to thy native land,  
 And there thy ant-born myrmidons command. 270  
 But mark this menace; since I must resign  
 My black-ey'd maid, to please the powers divine:  
 (A well-rigg'd vessel in the port attends,  
 Mann'd at my charge, commanded by my friends,)  
 The ship shall waft her to her wish'd abode, 275  
 Full fraught with holy bribes to the far-shouting God.  
 This thus dispatch'd, I owe myself the care,  
 My fame and injur'd honour to repair:  
 From thy own tent, proud man, in thy despight,  
 'This hand shall ravish thy pretended right. 280  
 Briseis shall be mine, and thou shalt see,  
 What odds of awful power I have on thee: [gree.  
 That others at thy cost may learn the difference of de-  
 At this th' impatient hero sourly smil'd:  
 His heart impetuous in his bosom boil'd. 285  
 And, jostled by two tides of equal sway,  
 Stood, for a while, suspended in his way,  
 Betwixt his reason, and his rage untam'd;  
 One whisper'd soft, and one aloud reclaim'd:  
 That only counsell'd to the safer side; 290  
 This to the sword, his ready hand apply'd.  
 Unpunish'd to support th' affront was hard:  
 Nor easy was th' attempt to force the guard.  
 But soon the thirst of vengeance fir'd his blood:  
 Half shone his faulchion, and half sheath'd it stood. 295  
 In that nice moment, Pallas, from above,  
 Commission'd by th' imperial wife of Jove,



Descended swift (the white arm'd queen was loath  
 The fight should follow; for she favour'd both):  
 Just as in act he stood, in clouds enshrin'd, 300  
 Her hand she fasten'd on his hair behind;  
 Then backward by his yellow curls she drew;  
 To him and him alone confess'd in view.

Tam'd by superior force, he turn'd his eyes  
 Aghast at first, and stupid with surprise: 305  
 But by her sparkling eyes and ardent look,  
 The warrior goddess known, he thus bespoke:

Com'st thou, celestial, to behold my wrongs?  
 To view the vengeance which to crimes belongs.

Thus he. The blue-ey'd Goddess thus rejoin'd:  
 I come to calm thy turbulence of mind, 310  
 If reason will resume her sovereign sway,  
 And, sent by Juno, her commands obey,  
 Equal she loves you both, and I protect:  
 Then give thy guardian Gods their due respect; 315  
 And cease contention; be thy words severe,  
 Sharp as he merits: but the sword forbear.  
 An hour unhop'd already wings her way,  
 When he his dire affront shall dearly pay:  
 When the proud king shall sue, with treble gain, 320  
 To quit thy loss, and conquer thy disdain,  
 But thou, secure of my unfailing word,  
 Compose thy swelling soul, and sheath the sword.

The youth thus answer'd mild; Auspicious maid,  
 Heaven's will be mine, and your commands obey'd.  
 The Gods are just, and when, subduing sense, 326  
 We serve their powers, provide the recompence.  
 He said; with surly faith believ'd her word,  
 And in the sheath, reluctant, plung'd the sword.  
 Her message done, she mounts the bless'd abodes, 330  
 And mix'd among the senate of the Gods.

At her departure his disdain return'd,  
 The fire she fann'd, with greater fury burn'd;  
 Rumbling within, till thus it found a vent:  
 Dastard, and drunkard, mean and insolent: 335  
 Tongue-valiant hero, vaunter of thy might,  
 In threats the foremost, but the lag in fight;



When didst thou thrust amid the mingled prease,  
 Content to bid the war, aloof in peace?  
 Arms are the trade of each plebeian soul: 340  
 'Tis death to fight; but kingly to control.  
 Lord-like at ease, with arbitrary power,  
 To peel the chiefs, the people to devour.  
 These, traitor, are thy talents; safer far  
 Than to contend in fields, and toils of war. 345  
 Nor couldst thou thus have dar'd the common hate,  
 Were not their souls as abject as their state.  
 But, by this sceptre, solemnly I swear, [bear,  
 (Which never more green leaf or growing branch shall  
 Torn from the tree, and given by Jove to those 350  
 Who laws dispense, and mighty wrongs oppose)  
 That when the Grecians want my wonted aid,  
 No gift shall bribe it, and no prayer persuade.  
 When Hector comes, the homicide to wield  
 His conquering arms, with corps to strew the field,  
 Then shalt thou mourn thy pride, and late confess 356  
 My wrong repented, when 'tis past redress.  
 He said: and with disdain, in open view,  
 Against the ground his golden sceptre threw;  
 Then fate: with boiling rage Atrides burn'd, 360  
 And foam betwixt his gnashing grinders churn'd.  
 But from his seat the Pylian prince arose,  
 With reasoning mild, their madness to compose:  
 Words, sweet as honey, from his mouth distill'd;  
 Two centuries already he fulfill'd; 365  
 And now began the third; unbroken yet:  
 Once fam'd for courage, still in council great.  
 What worse, he said, can Argos undergo,  
 What can more gratify the Phrygian foe,  
 Than these distemper'd heats? If both the lights 370  
 Of Greece their private interest disunites!  
 Believe a friend with thrice your years increas'd,  
 And let these youthful passions be repress'd:  
 I flourish'd long before your birth; and then  
 Liv'd equal with a race of braver men 375  
 Than these dim eyes shall e'er behold again.



Ceneus and Dryas, and, excelling them,  
 Great Theseus, and the force of greater Polypheme.  
 With these I went, a brother of the war,  
 Their dangers to divide, their fame to share. 380  
 Nor idle stood with unassisting hands,  
 When salvage beasts, and men's more salvage bands,  
 Their virtuous toil subdu'd : yet those I sway'd,  
 With powerful speech : I spoke, and they obey'd.  
 If such as those my counsels could reclaim, 385  
 Think not, young warriors, your diminish'd name  
 Shall lose of lustre, by subjecting rage  
 To the cool dictates of experienc'd age.  
 Thou, king of men, stretch not thy sovereign sway  
 Beyond the bounds free subjects can obey ; 390  
 But let Pelides in his prize rejoice,  
 Achiev'd in arms, allow'd by public voice.  
 Nor thou, brave champion, with his power contend,  
 Before whose throne, ev'n kings their lower'd sceptres bend.

The head of action he, and thou the hand, 395  
 Matchless thy force, but mightier his command ;  
 Thou first, O king, release the rights of sway ;  
 Power, self-restrain'd, the people best obey.  
 Sanctions of law from thee derive their source ;  
 Command thyself, whom no commands can force .400  
 The son of Thetis, rampire of our host,  
 Is worth our care to keep, nor shall my prayers be lost.

Thus Nestor said, and ceas'd : Atrides broke  
 His silence next ; but ponder'd e'er he spoke.  
 Wise are thy words, and glad I would obey, 405  
 But this proud man affects imperial sway.  
 Controlling kings, and trampling on our state,  
 His will is law ; and what he wills is fate.  
 The gods have given him strength : but whence the style  
 Of lawless power assum'd, or licence to revile ? 410

Achilles cut him short ; and thus reply'd :  
 My worth, allow'd in words, is in effect deny'd,  
 For who but a poltroon, possess'd with fear,  
 Such haughty insolence can tamely bear ?



Command thy slaves : my freeborn soul disdains 415  
 A tyrant's curb ; and restiff breaks the reins.  
 Take this along ; that no dispute shall rise  
 (Though mine the woman) for my ravish'd prize :  
 But she excepted, as unworthy strife,  
 Dare not, I charge thee dare not, on thy life, 420  
 Touch aught of mine beside, by lot my due,  
 But stand aloof, and think profane to view :  
 This faulchion, else, not hitherto withstood,  
 These hostile fields shall fatten with thy blood.  
 He said, and rose the first : the council broke ; 425  
 And all their grave consults dissolv'd in smoke.  
 The royal youth retir'd, on vengeance bent,  
 Patroclus follow'd silent to his tent.  
 Meantime, the king with gifts a vessel stores ;  
 Supplies the banks with twenty chosen oars : 430  
 And next, to reconcile the shooter God,  
 Within her hollow sides the sacrifice he stow'd :  
 Chryseis last was set on board ; whose hand  
 Ulysses took, intrusted with command :  
 They plow the liquid seas, and leave the lessening land.  
 Atrides then, his outward zeal to boast, 436  
 Bade purify the sun-polluted host.  
 With perfect hecatombs the God they grac'd ;  
 Whose offer'd entrails in the main were cast.  
 Black bulls and bearded goats on altars lie ; 440  
 And clouds of savory stench involve the sky.  
 These pomps the royal hypocrite design'd  
 For shew ; but harbour'd vengeance in his mind :  
 Till holy malice, longing for a vent,  
 At length discover'd his conceal'd intent. 445  
 Talthybius, and Eurybates the just,  
 Heralds of arms, and ministers of trust,  
 He call'd, and thus bespoke : Haste hence your way :  
 And from the Goddess-born demand his prey.  
 If yielded, bring the captive : if deny'd, 450  
 The king (so tell him) shall chastise his pride,  
 And with arm'd multitudes in person come,  
 To vindicate his power, and justify his doom.



This hard command unwilling they obey,  
 And o'er the barren shore pursue their way, 355  
 Where quarter'd in their camp the fierce Theſſalians lay.  
 Their ſov'reign ſeated on his chair, they find ;  
 His penſive cheek upon his hand reclin'd,  
 And anxious thoughts revolving in his mind.  
 With gloomy looks he ſaw them entering in 460  
 Without ſalute : nor durſt they firſt begin,  
 Fearful of raſh offence and death forſeen.  
 He ſoon, the cauſe divining, clear'd his brow ;  
 And thus did liberty of ſpeech allow.

Interpreters of Gods and men, be bold : 465  
 Awful your character, and uncontroll'd,  
 Howe'er unpleaſing be the news you bring,  
 I blame not you, but your imperious king.  
 You come, I know, my captive to demand :  
 Patroclus, give her to the herald's hand. 470  
 But you, authentic witneſſes I bring,  
 Before the Gods, and your ungrateful king,  
 Of this my manifeſt : that never more  
 This hand ſhall combat on the crooked ſhore :  
 No, let the Grecian powers, oppreſs'd in fight, 475  
 Unpity'd periſh in their tyrant's fight.  
 Blind of the future, and by rage miſled,  
 He pulls his crimes upon his people's head.  
 Forc'd from the field in trenches to contend,  
 And his insulted camp from foes defend. 480  
 He ſaid ; and ſoon obeying his intent,  
 Patroclus brought Brifeis from her tent ;  
 Then to th' entruſted meſſengers reſign'd :  
 She wept, and often caſt her eyes behind :  
 Forc'd from the man ſhe lov'd : they led her thence, 485  
 Along the ſhore, a priſoner to their prince.

Sole on the barren ſands the ſuff'ring chief  
 Roar'd out for anguiſh, and indulg'd his grief.  
 Caſt on his kindred ſeas a ſtormy look,  
 And his upbraided mother thus beſpoke : 490  
 Unhappy parent of a ſhort-liv'd ſon,  
 Since Jove in pity by thy pray'rs was won



To grace thy small remains of breath with fame,  
 Why loads he this imbitter'd life with shame?  
 Suffering his king of men to force my slave,  
 Whom, well deserv'd in war, the Grecians gave. 495

Set by old Ocean's side the goddess heard,  
 Then from the sacred deep her head she rear'd;  
 Rose like a morning-mist; and thus begun  
 To sooth the sorrows of her plaintive son. 500  
 Why cries my care? and why conceals his smart?  
 Let thy afflicted parent share her part.

Then, sighing from the bottom of his breast,  
 To the Sea-Goddess thus the Goddess born address'd:  
 Thou know'st my pain, which telling but recalls: 505  
 By force of arms we raz'd the Theban walls;  
 The ransack'd city, taken by our toils,  
 We left, and hither brought the golden spoils;  
 Equal we shar'd them; but before the rest,  
 The proud prerogative had seiz'd the best. 510

Chryseis was the greedy tyrant's prize,  
 Chryseis, rosy-cheek'd, with charming eyes.  
 Her sire, Apollo's priest, arriv'd to buy,  
 With proffer'd gifts of price, his daughter's liberty.  
 Suppliant before the Grecian chiefs he stood, 515  
 Awful, and arm'd with ensigns of his God:  
 Bare was his hoary head, one holy hand [command,  
 Held forth his laurel crown, and one his sceptre of  
 His suit was common, but above the rest  
 To both the brother princes was address'd. 520

With shouts of loud acclaim the Greeks agree  
 To take the gifts, to set the prisoner free.  
 Not so the tyrant, who with scorn the priest  
 Receiv'd, and with opprobrious words dismiss'd.  
 The good old man forlorn of human aid, 525

For vengeance to his heavenly patron pray'd:  
 The Godhead gave a favourable ear,  
 And granted all to him he held so dear;  
 In an ill hour his piercing shafts he sped;  
 And heaps on heaps of slaughter'd Greeks lay dead.  
 While round the camp he rang'd: at length arose 531  
 A seer who well divin'd; and durst disclose



The source of all our ills : I took the word ;  
 And urg'd the sacred slave to be restor'd,  
 The god appeas'd : the swelling monarch storm'd : 535  
 And then the vengeance vow'd, he since perform'd :  
 The Greeks, 'tis true, their ruin to prevent,  
 Have to the royal priest his daughter sent ;  
 But from the haughty king his heralds came,  
 And seiz'd, by his command, my captive dame, 540  
 By common suffrage giv'n ; but thou, be won,  
 If in thy pow'r, t'avenge thy injur'd son :  
 Ascend the skies ; and supplicating move  
 Thy just complaints, to cloud-compelling Jove.  
 If thou by either word or deed hast wrought 545  
 A kind remembrance in his grateful thought,  
 Urge him by that : for often hast thou said  
 Thy power was once not useless in his aid,  
 When he, who high above the highest reigns,  
 Surpris'd by traitor Gods, was bound in chains. 550  
 When Juno, Pallas, with ambition fir'd,  
 And his blue brother of the seas conspir'd,  
 Thou freed'st the sovereign of unworthy bands,  
 Thou brought'st Briareus with his hundred hands,  
 (So call'd in heaven, but mortal men below 555  
 By his terrestrial name *Ægeon* know :  
 Twice stronger than his fire, who sat above  
 Assessor to the throne of thundering Jove.)  
 The Gods, dismay'd at his approach, withdrew,  
 Nor durst their unaccomplish'd crime pursue. 560  
 That action to his grateful mind recal ;  
 Embrace his knees, and at his footstool fall :  
 That now, if ever, he will aid our foes ;  
 Let Troy's triumphant troops the camp enclose :  
 Ours beaten to the shore, the siege forsake ; 565  
 And what their king deserves, with him partake.  
 That the proud tyrant, at his proper cost,  
 May learn the value of the man he lost.

To whom the mother-goddess thus reply'd,  
 Sigh'd e'er she spoke, and while she spoke she cry'd :  
 Ah, wretched me ! by fates averse, decreed, 571  
 To bring thee forth with pain, with care to breed !



Did envious heaven not otherwise ordain,  
Safe in thy hollow ships thou shouldst remain,  
Nor ever tempt the fatal field again.

575

But now thy planet sheds his poisonous rays,  
And short, and full of sorrow are thy days,  
For what remains, to heaven I will ascend,  
And at the thunderer's throne thy suit commend.

Till then, secure in ships, abstain from fight? 580  
Indulge thy grief in tears, and vent thy spight.

For yesterday the court of heaven with Jove  
Remov'd: 'tis dead vacation now above.

Twelve days the gods their solemn revels keep,  
And quaff with blameless Ethiops in the deep. 585

Return'd from thence, to heaven my flight I take,  
Knock at the brazen gates, and providence awake.

Embrace his knees, and suppliant to the fire,  
Doubt not I will obtain the grant of thy desire.

She said: and parting left him on the place, 590  
Swoln with disdain, resenting his disgrace:

Revengeful thoughts revolving in his mind,  
He wept for anger, and for love he pin'd.

Meantime with prosperous gales Ulysses brought  
The slave, and ship with sacrifices fraught, 595

To Chrysa's port; where, entering with the tide  
He dropp'd his anchors, and his oars he ply'd;

Furl'd every sail, and drawing down the mast,  
His vessel moor'd, and made with haulers fast.

Descending on the plain, ashore they bring 600  
The hecatomb to please the shooter king.

The dame before an altar's holy fire

Ulysses led, and thus bespoke her fire:

Reverenc'd be thou, and be thy God ador'd;  
The king of men thy daughter has restor'd, 605

And sent by me with presents and with pray'r;  
He recommends him to thy pious care,

That Phœbus at thy suit his wrath may cease,  
And give the penitent offenders peace.

He said, and gave her to her father's hands, 610  
Who glad receiv'd her, free from servile bands.



This done, in order they, with sober grace,  
 Their gifts around the well-built altar place ;  
 Then wash'd, and took the cakes ; while Chryses stood  
 With hands upheld, and thus invok'd his god : 615

God of the silver bow, whose eyes survey  
 The sacred Cilla, thou whose awful sway  
 Chrysa the blest, and Tenedos, obey,  
 Now hear, as thou before my pray'r hast heard,  
 Against the Grecians and their prince preferr'd : 620  
 Once thou hast honour'd, honour once again  
 Thy priest ; nor let his second vows be vain ;  
 But from th' afflicted host, and humbled prince,  
 Avert thy wrath, and cease thy pestilence,  
 Apollo heard, and conquering his disdain, 625  
 Unbent his bow, and Greece respir'd again.

Now when the solemn rites of pray'r were past,  
 Their salted cakes on crackling flames they cast :  
 Then turning back, the sacrifice they sped ;  
 The fatted oxen flew, and flea'd the dead ; 630  
 Chopp'd off their nervous thighs, and next prepar'd  
 T' involve the lean in cauls, and mend with lard.  
 Sweet-breads and collops were with skewers prick'd  
 About the sides, imbibing what they deck'd.  
 The priest with holy hands was seen to tine 635  
 The cloven wood, and pour the ruddy wine.  
 The youth approach'd the fire ; and as it burn'd,  
 On five sharp broachers rank'd, the roast they turn'd.  
 These morsels stay'd their stomach's ; then the rest  
 They cut in legs and fillets for the feast ; 640  
 Which drawn and serv'd, their hunger they appease  
 With savory meat, and set their minds at ease.  
 Now when the rage of eating was repelled,  
 The boys with generous wine the goblets fill'd.  
 The first libations to the Gods they pour ; 645  
 And then with songs indulge the genial hour.  
 Holy debauch ! Till day to night they bring,  
 With hymns and pæans to the bowyer king.  
 At sun-set to their ship they make return,  
 And snore secure on decks till rosy morn. 650



The skies with dawning day were purpled o'er.  
 Awak'd, with labouring oars they leave the shore.  
 The power appeas'd, with winds suffic'd the sail;  
 The bellying canvas strutted with the gale:  
 The waves indignant roar with surly pride, 655  
 And press against the sides, and, beaten off, divide.  
 They cut the foamy way, with force impell'd  
 Superior, till the Trojan port they held;  
 Then hauling on the strand, their galley moor,  
 And pitch their tents along the crooked shore. 660  
 Meantime the Goddefs-born in secret pin'd,  
 Nor visited the camp, nor in the council join'd;  
 But keeping close, his gnawing heart he fed  
 With hopes of vengeance on the tyrant's head,  
 And wish'd for bloody wars and mortal wounds, 665  
 And of the Greeks oppress'd in fight to hear the  
 dying sounds.

Now when twelve days complete had run their race,  
 The Gods bethought them of the cares belonging to  
 their place.

Jove at their head ascending from the sea:  
 A shoal of puny powers attend his way. 670  
 Then Thetis, not unmindful of her son,  
 Emerging from the deep, to beg her boon,  
 Pursu'd their track; and waken'd from his rest,  
 Before the sovereign stood a morning guest.  
 Him in the circle, but apart, she found: 675  
 The rest at awful distance stood around.  
 She bow'd; and ere she durst her suit begin,  
 One hand embrac'd his knees, one prop'd his chin.  
 Then thus: If I, celestial fire, in aught  
 Have serv'd thy will, or gratify'd thy thought, 680  
 One glimpse of glory to my issue give,  
 Grac'd for the little time he has to live.  
 Dishonour'd by the king of men he stands:  
 His rightful prize is ravish'd from his hands.  
 But thou, O father, in my son's defence, 685  
 Assume thy power, assert thy providence.  
 Let Troy prevail, till Greece th' affront has paid  
 With doubled honours, and redeem'd his aid.



She ceas'd ; but the considering God was mute ;  
 Till she, resolv'd to win, renew'd her suit, 690  
 Nor loos'd her hold, but forc'd him to reply ;  
 Or grant me my petition, or deny :  
 Jove cannot fear : then tell me to my face,  
 That I, of all the gods, am least in grace.  
 This I can bear. The Cloud-compeller mourn'd ; 695  
 And sighing first, this answer he return'd :  
 Know'st thou what clamours will disturb my reign,  
 What my stunn'd ears from Juno must sustain ?  
 In council she gives licence to her tongue,  
 Loquacious, brawling, ever in the wrong : 700  
 And now she will my partial power upbraid,  
 If, alienate from Greece, I give the Trojans aid.  
 But thou depart, and shun her jealous fight :  
 The care be mine to do Pelides right.  
 Go then, and on the faith of Jove rely ; 705  
 When, nodding to thy suit, he bows the sky.  
 This ratifies th' irrevocable doom :  
 The sign ordain'd, that what I will shall come :  
 The stamp of heaven, and seal of fate. He said,  
 And shook the sacred honours of his head. 710  
 With terror trembled heaven's subsiding hill ;  
 And from his shaken curls ambrosial dews distil.  
 The goddess goes exulting from his sight,  
 And seeks the seas profound, and leaves the realms  
 of light.

He moves into his hall : the powers resort, 715  
 Each from his house, to fill the sovereign's court ;  
 Nor waiting summons, nor expecting stood ;  
 But met with reverence, and receiv'd the God.  
 He mounts the throne ; and Juno took her place ;  
 But sullen discontent sat lowering on her face. 720  
 With jealous eyes at distance she had seen,  
 Whispering with Jove, the silver-footed Queen ;  
 Then, impotent of tongue (her silence broke)  
 Thus turbulent in rattling tone she spoke.

Author of ills, and close contriver Jove, 725  
 Which of thy dames, what prostitute of love,



TRANSLATIONS.

Has held thy ear so long, and begg'd so hard,  
For some old service done, some new reward?  
Apart you talk'd, for that's your special care,  
The concert never must the council share. 730

One gracious word is for a wife too much:  
Such is a marriage vow; and Jove's own faith is such.

Then thus the Sire of Gods, and men below,  
What I have hidden, hope not thou to know.  
E'en goddesses are women; and no wife 735

Has power to regulate her husband's life:  
Counsel she may; and I will give thy ear  
The knowledge first, of what is fit to hear.  
What I transact with others, or alone,  
Beware to learn, nor press too near the throne. 740

To whom the Goddess with the charming eyes:  
What hast thou said, O tyrant of the skies!  
When did I search the secrets of thy reign,  
Though privileg'd to know, but privileg'd in vain?  
But well thou dost, to hide from common sight, 745  
Thy close intrigues, too bad to bear the light:  
Nor doubt I, but the silver-footed dame,  
Tripping from sea, on such an errand came,  
To grace her issue, at the Grecian's cost,  
And for one peevish man destroy an host. 750

To whom the Thunderer made this stern reply:  
My household curse, my lawful plague, the spy  
Of Jove's designs, his other squinting eye.  
Why this vain prying, and for what avail?  
Jove will be master still, and Juno fail. 755  
Should thy suspicious thoughts divine aright,  
Thou but becom'st more odious to my sight  
For this attempt: uneasy life to me,  
Still watch'd and importun'd, but worse for thee.  
Curb that impetuous tongue, before too late; 760  
The Gods behold, and tremble at thy fate;  
Pitying, but daring not, in thy defence,  
To lift a hand against Omnipotence.

This heard, th' imperious queen fate mute with  
fear,  
Nor further durst incense the gloomy Thunderer. 765



Silence was in the court at this rebuke ;  
Nor could the Gods, abash'd, sustain their sovereign's  
look.

The limping Smith observ'd the sudden feast,  
And, hopping here and there, (himself a jest)  
Put in his word, that neither might offend ; 770  
To Jove obsequious, yet his mother's friend.  
What end in heaven will be of civil war,  
If gods of pleasure will for mortals jar ?  
Such discord but disturbs our jovial feast ;  
One grain of bad embitters all the best. 775

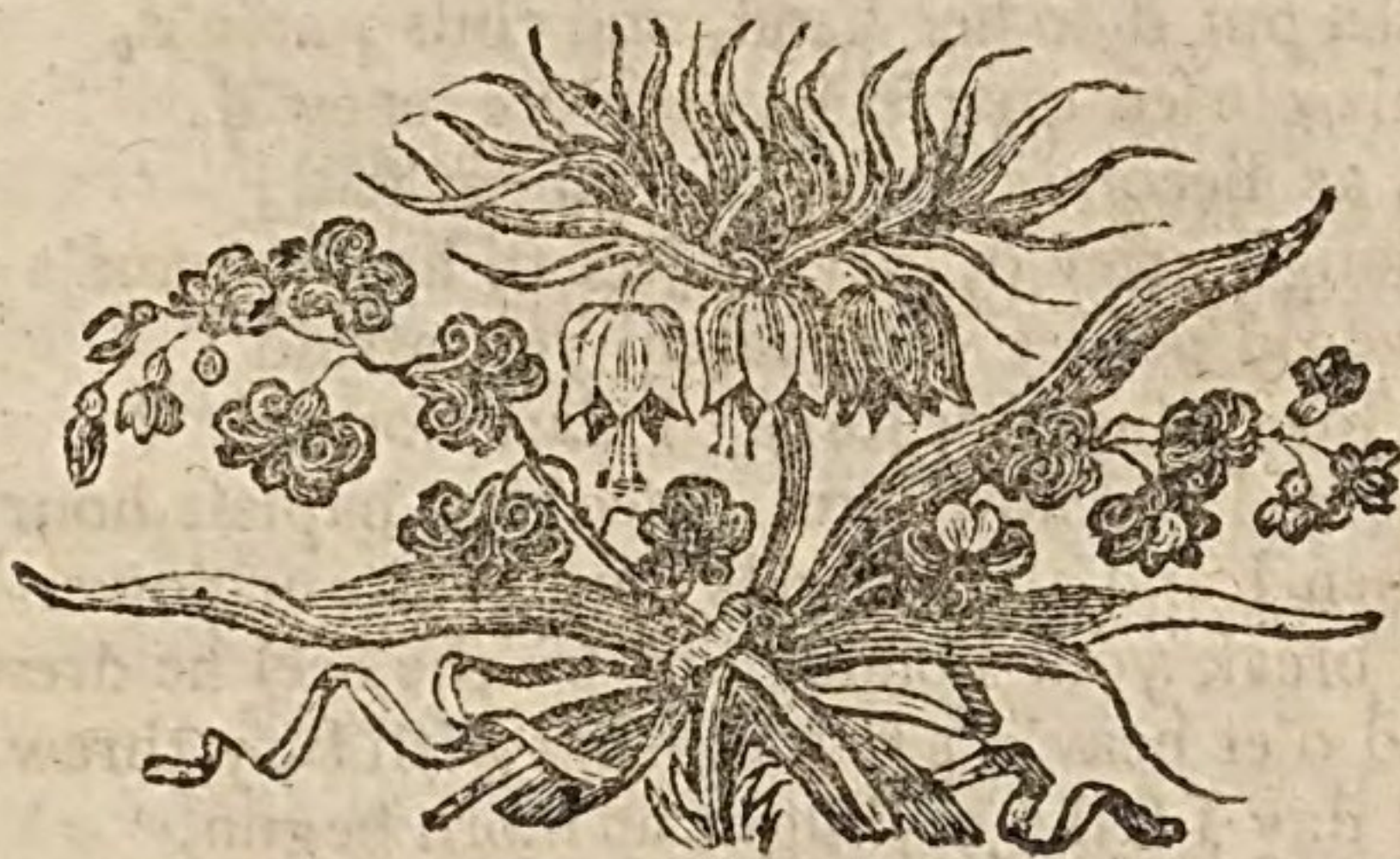
Mother, though wise yourself, my counsel weigh ;  
'Tis much unsafe my fire to disobey.  
Not only you provoke him to your cost,  
But mirth is marr'd, and the good cheer is lost.  
Tempt not his heavy hand ; for he has power 780  
To throw you headlong from his heavenly tower,  
But one submissive word which you let fall,  
Will make him in good humour with us all.

He said no more ; but crown'd a bowl, unbid :  
The laughing nectar overlook'd the lid : 785  
Then put it to her hand, and thus pursu'd,  
'This cursed quarrel be no more renew'd.  
Be, as becomes a wife, obedient still ;  
Though griev'd, yet subject to her husband's will.  
I would not see you beaten, yet, afraid 790  
Of Jove's superior force, I dare not aid.  
Too well I know him, since that hapless hour  
When I and all the gods employ'd our power  
To break your bonds : me by the heel he drew,  
And o'er heav'n's battlements with fury threw. 795  
All day I fell : my flight at morn begun,  
And ended not but with the setting sun :  
Pitch'd on my head, at length the Lemnian ground  
Receiv'd my batter'd skull, the Sinthians heal'd my  
wound.

At Vulcan's homely mirth his mother smil'd, 800  
And, smiling, took the cup the clown had fill'd,  
The reconciler bowl went round the board,  
Which, emptied, the rude skinker still restor'd.



Loud fits of laughter seiz'd the guests to see  
 The limping god so deſt at his new miniſtry. 805  
 The feaſt continued till declining light : [night.  
 They drank, they laugh'd, they lov'd, and then 'twas  
 Nor wanted tuneful harp, nor vocal choir ;  
 The Muſes fung ; Apollo touch'd the lyre.  
 Drunken at laſt, and drowſy they depart, 810  
 Each to his houſe ; adorn'd with labour'd art  
 Of the lame architect : the thundering god  
 Even withdrew to reſt, and had his load.  
 His ſwimming head to needful ſleep apply'd ;  
 And Juno lay unheeded by his ſide. 815





THE LAST PARTING OF  
HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE.

FROM THE  
SIXTH BOOK OF THE ILIAD.

The Argument.

Hector, returning from the field of battle, to visit Helen his sister-in-law and his brother Paris, who had fought unsuccessfully hand in hand with Menelaus, from thence goes to his own palace to see his wife Andromache, and his infant son Astyanax. The description of that interview is the subject of this translation.

**T**HUS having said, brave Hector went to see  
 His virtuous wife, the fair Andromache.  
 He found her not at home ; for she was gone,  
 Attended by her maid and infant son,  
 To climb the steepy tower of Ilion : 5  
 From whence, with heavy heart, she might survey  
 The bloody business of the dreadful day.  
 Her mournful eyes she cast around the plain,  
 And sought the lord of her desires in vain.  
 But he, who thought his peopled palace bare 10  
 When she, his only comfort, was not there,  
 Stood in the gate, and ask'd of every one  
 Which way she took, and whither she was gone ;  
 If to the court, or, with his mother's train,  
 In long procession, to Minerva's fane ? 15  
 The servants answer'd, Neither to the court,  
 Where Priam's sons and daughters did resort,  
 Nor to the temple was she gone, to move  
 With prayers the blue-ey'd progeny of Jove ;  
 But, more solicitous for him alone, 20  
 Than all their safety, to the tower was gone,  
 There to survey the labours of the field,  
 Where the Greeks conquer, and the Trojans yield ;  
 Swiftly she pass'd, with fear and fury wild ;  
 The nurse went lagging after with the child. 25

This heard, the noble Hector made no stay ;  
 Th' admiring throng divide to give him way ;



He pass'd through every street, by which he came,  
And at the gate he met the mournful dame.

His wife beheld him, and, with eager pace,  
Flew to his arms, to meet a dear embrace : 30

His wife, who brought in dower Celicia's crown,  
And in herself a greater dower alone :

Aetion's heir, who on the woody plain  
Of Hippoplacus did in Thebe reign. 35

Breathless she flew, with joy and passion wild,  
The nurse came lagging after with the child.

The royal babe upon her breast was laid ;  
Who, like the morning star, his beams display'd.  
Scamandrius was his name, which Hector gave, 40  
From that fair flood which Ilion's walls did lave :

But him Aetyanax the Trojans call,  
From his great father, who defends the wall.

Hector beheld him with a silent smile :  
His tender wife stood weeping by the while : 45

Press'd in her own his warlike hand she took,  
Then sigh'd, and thus prophetically spoke :

Thy dauntless heart (which I foresee too late)  
Too daring man, will urge thee to thy fate :  
Nor dost thou pity with a parent's mind, 50

This helpless orphan, which thou leav'st behind ;  
Nor me, th' unhappy partner of thy bed ;

Who must in triumph by the Greeks be led ;  
They seek thy life, and, in unequal fight

With many, will oppress thy single might : 55  
Better it were for miserable me

To die before the fate which I foresee ;

For ah ! what comfort can the world bequeath  
To Hector's widow, after Hector's death ?

Eternal sorrow and perpetual tears 60  
Began my youth, and will conclude my years :

I have no parents, friends, nor brothers left ;  
By stern Achilles all of life bereft.

Then, when the walls of Thebes he overthrew,  
His fatal hand my royal father flew ; 65

He slew Aetion, but despoil'd him not ;  
Nor in his hate the funeral rites forgot ;



Arm'd as he was he sent him whole below,  
 And rev'renc'd thus the manes of his foe:  
 A tomb he rais'd: the mountain nymphs around 70  
 Enclos'd with planted elms the holy ground.

My seven brave brothers, in one fatal day,  
 To Death's dark mansions took their mournful way;  
 Slain by the same Achilles, while they keep  
 The bellowing oxen and the bleating sheep; 75  
 My mother, who the royal sceptre sway'd,  
 Was captive to the cruel victor made,  
 And hither led; but, hence redeem'd with gold,  
 Her native country did again behold,  
 And but beheld; for soon Diana's dart, 80  
 In an unhappy chase, transfix'd her heart.

But thou, my Hector, art thyself alone  
 My parents, brother, and my lord, in one;  
 O kill not all my kindred o'er again,  
 Nor tempt the dangers of the dusty plain; 85  
 But in this tower, for our defence remain.  
 Thy wife and son are in thy ruin lost:  
 This is a husband's and a father's post.  
 The Scæan gate commands the plains below:  
 Here marshal all thy soldiers as they go; 90  
 And hence with other hands repel the foe.  
 By yon wild fig-tree lies their chief ascent,  
 And thither all their powers are daily bent:  
 The two Ajaces have I often seen,  
 And the wrong'd husband of the Spartan queen: 95  
 With him his greater brother, and with these  
 Fierce Diomede and bold Meriones:  
 Uncertain if, by augury, or chance,  
 But by this easy rise they all advance;  
 Guard well that pass, secure of all beside. 100  
 To whom the noble Hector thus reply'd:

That and the rest are in my daily care;  
 But should I shun the dangers of the war,  
 With scorn the Trojans would reward my pains,  
 And their proud ladies with their sweeping trains. 105  
 The Grecian swords and lances I can bear,  
 But loss of honour is my only fear.



Shall Hector, born to war, his birth-right yield,  
Belie his courage, and forsake the field?

Early in rugged arms I took delight, 110

And still have been the foremost in the fight:

With dangers dearly have I bought renown,

And am the champion of my father's crown.

And yet my mind forebodes, with sure presage,  
That Troy shall perish by the Grecian rage. 115

The fatal day draws on when I must fall;

And universal ruin cover all.

Not Troy itself, though built by hands divine,

Nor Priam, nor his people, nor his line,

My mother, nor my brothers of renown, 120

Whose valour yet defends th' unhappy town;

Not these, nor all their fates which I foresee,

Are half of that concern I have for thee.

I see, I see thee, in that fatal hour,

Subjected to the victor's cruel power; 125

Led hence a slave to some insulting sword,

Forlorn and trembling at a foreign lord;

A spectacle in Argos, at the loom,

Gracing with Trojan fights a Grecian room;

Or from deep wells the living stream to take, 130

And on thy weary shoulders bring it back.

While, groaning under this laborious life,

They insolently call thee Hector's wife;

Upbraid thy bondage with thy husband's name;

And from my glory propagate thy shame. 135

This when they say, thy sorrows will increase

With anxious thoughts of former happiness;

That he is dead who could thy wrongs redress.

But I, oppress'd with iron sleep before,

Shall hear thy unavailing cries no more. 140

He said—

Then, holding forth his arms, he took his boy,

The pledge of love, and other hope of Troy.

The fearful infant turn'd his head away,

And on his nurse's neck reclining lay, 145

His unknown father shunning with affright,

And looking back on so uncouth a sight;



Daunted to see a face with steel o'erspread,  
 And his high plume that nodded o'er his head.  
 His fire and mother smil'd with silent joy ; 150  
 And Hector hasten'd to relieve his boy ;  
 Dismiss'd his burnish'd helm, and shone afar,  
 The pride of warriors, and the pomp of war :  
 Th' illustrious babe, thus reconcil'd, he took :  
 Hugg'd in his arms, and kiss'd, and thus he spoke :  
 Parent of Gods and men, propitious Jove, 156  
 And you bright synod of the Powers above ;  
 On this my son your gracious gifts bestow,  
 Grant him to live, and great in arms to grow,  
 To reign in Troy, to govern with renown, 160  
 To shield the people, and assert the crown ;  
 That, when hereafter he from war shall come,  
 And bring his Trojans peace and triumph home,  
 Some aged man who lives this act to see,  
 And who in former times remember'd me, 165  
 May say, the son in fortitude and fame  
 Outgoes the mark, and drowns his father's name ;  
 That at these words his mother may rejoice,  
 And add her suffrage to the public voice.

Thus having said, 170  
 He first with suppliant hands the Gods ador'd :  
 Then to the mother's arms the child restor'd ;  
 With tears and smiles she took her son, and press'd  
 Th' illustrious infant to her fragrant breast.  
 He, wiping her fair eyes, indulg'd her grief, 175  
 And eas'd her sorrows with this last relief.

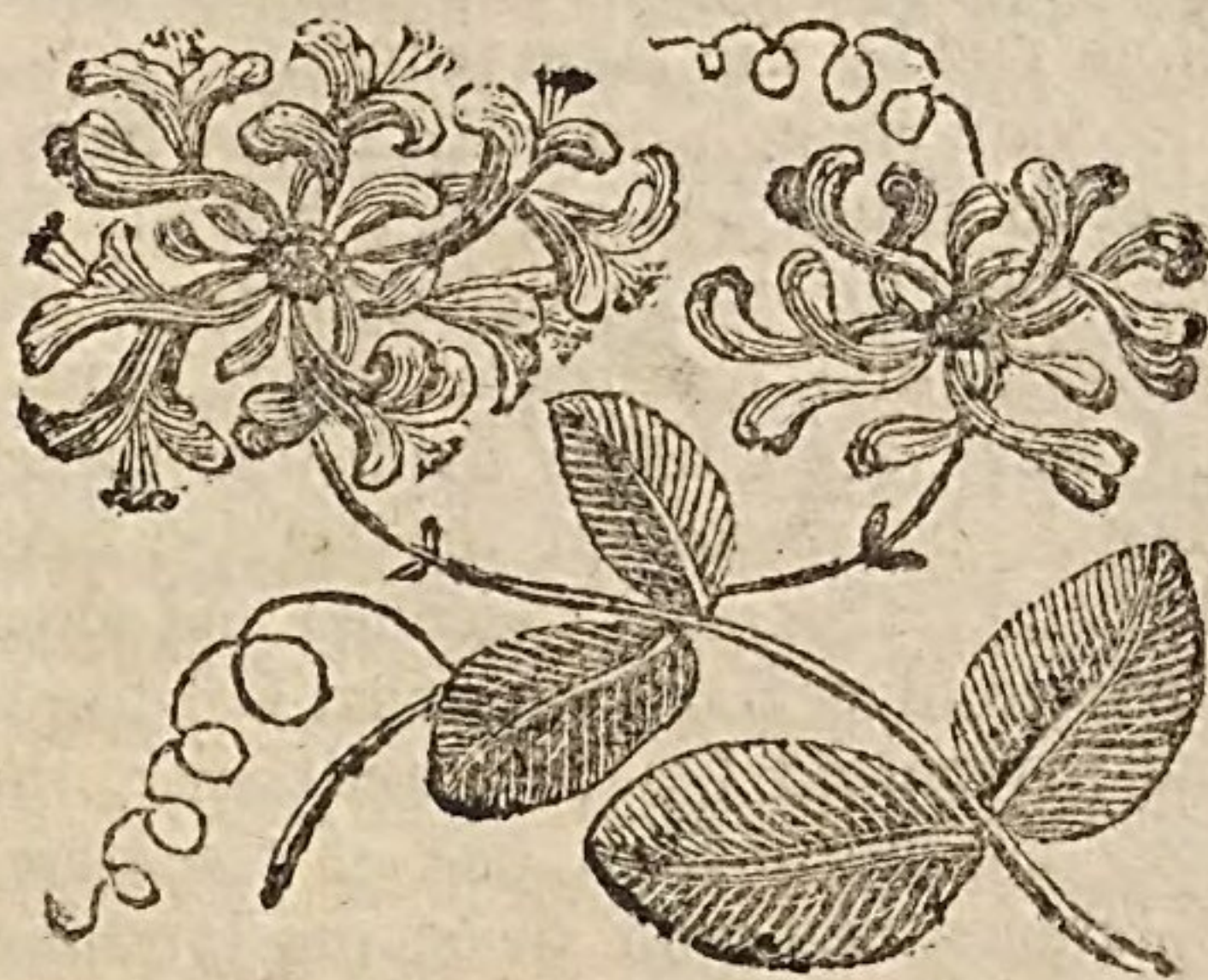
My wife and mistress, drive thy fears away,  
 Nor give so bad an omen to the day ;  
 Think not it lies in any Grecian's power,  
 To take my life before the fatal hour. 180  
 When that arrives, nor good nor bad can fly  
 Th' irrevocable doom of destiny.  
 Return, and, to divert thy thoughts at home,  
 There task thy maids, and exercise thy loom,  
 Employ'd in works that womankind become. 183  
 The toils of war and feats of chivalry  
 Belong to men, and most of all to me.



At this, for new replies he did not stay,  
But lac'd his crested helm, and strode away.  
His lovely consort to her house return'd,  
And looking often back in silence mourn'd :  
Home when she came, her secret woe she vents,  
And fills the palace with her loud laments ;  
These loud laments her echoing maids restore,  
And Hector, yet alive, as dead deplore.

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# TALES & FABLES.

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TO HIS GRACE

THE DUKE OF ORMOND.

MY LORD,

SOME estates are held in England by paying a fine at the change of every lord : I have enjoyed the patronage of your family, from the time of your excellent grandfather to this present day. I have dedicated the translation of the lives of Plutarch to the first Duke ; and have celebrated the memory of your heroic father. Though I am very short of the age of Nestor, yet I have lived to a third generation of your house ; and, by your Grace's favour, am admitted still to hold from you by the same tenure.

I am not vain enough to boast that I have deserved the value of so illustrious a line ; but my fortune is the greater, that for three descents they have been pleased to distinguish my poems from those of other men ; and have accordingly made me their peculiar care. May it be permitted me to say, that as your grandfather and father were cherished and adorned with honours by two successive monarchs, so I have been esteemed and patronized by the grandfather, the father, and the son, descended from one of the most ancient, most conspicuous, and most deserving families in Europe.

It is true, that by delaying the payment of my last fine, when it was due by your Grace's accession to the titles and patrimonies of your house, I may seem, in rigour of law, to have made a forfeiture of my claim ; yet my heart has always been devoted to your service : and since you have been graciously pleased, by your permission of this address, to accept the tender of my duty, it is not yet too late to lay these volumes at your feet.



The world is sensible that you worthily succeed, not only to the honours of your ancestors, but also to their virtues. The long chain of magnanimity, courage, easiness of access, and desire of doing good even to the prejudice of your fortune, is so far from being broken in your Grace, that the precious metal yet runs pure to the newest link of it : which I will not call the last, because I hope and pray it may descend to late posterity : and your flourishing youth, and that of your excellent Duchefs, are happy omens of my wish.

It is observed by Livy, and by others, that some of the noblest Roman families retained a resemblance of their ancestry, not only in their shapes and features, but also in their manners, their qualities, and the distinguishing characters of their minds : some lines were noted for a stern rigid virtue, savage, haughty, parsimonious, and unpopular : others were more sweet and affable, made of a more pliant paste, humble, courteous, and obliging ; studious of doing charitable offices, and diffusive of the goods which they enjoyed. The last of these is the proper and indelible character of your Grace's family. God Almighty has endued you with a softness, a beneficence, an attractive behaviour on the hearts of others ; and so sensible of their misery, that the wounds of fortune seem not inflicted on them, but on yourself. You are so ready to redress, that you almost prevent their wishes, and always exceed their expectations : as if what was yours was not your own, and not given you to possess, but to bestow on wanting merit. But this is a topic which I must cast in shades, lest I offend your modesty, which is so far from being ostentatious of the good you do, that it blushes even to have it known : and therefore I must leave you to the satisfaction and testimony of your own conscience, which, though it be a silent panegyric, is yet the best.

You are so easy of access, that Poplicola was not more, whose doors were opened on the outside to save the people even the common civility of asking entrance ;



where all were equally admitted ; where nothing that was reasonable was denied ; where misfortune was a powerful recommendation, and where (I can scarce forbear saying) that want itself was a powerful mediator, and was next to merit.

The history of Peru assures us that their Incas, above all their titles, esteemed that the highest which called them lovers of the poor : a name more glorious than the Felix, Pious, and Augustus, of the Roman emperors ; which were epithets of flattery, deserved by few of them ; and not running in the blood, like the perpetual gentleness and inherent goodness of the Ormond family.

Gold, as it is the purest, so it is the softest and most ductile of all metals : iron, which is the hardest, gathers rust, corrodes itself, and is therefore subject to corruption : it was never intended for coins and medals ; or to bear faces and the inscriptions of the great. Indeed, it is fit for armour, to bear off insults, and preserve the wearer in the day of battle ; but the danger once repelled, it is laid aside by the brave, as a garment too rough for civil conversation : a necessary guard in war, but too harsh and cumbersome in peace, and which keeps off the embraces of a more humane life.

For this reason, my Lord, though you have courage in a heroical degree, yet I ascribe it to you, but as your second attribute : mercy, beneficence, and compassion, claim precedence, as they are first in the divine nature. An intrepid courage, which is inherent in your Grace, is at best but a holiday kind of virtue, to be seldom exercised, and never but in cases of necessity ; affability, mildness, tenderness, and a word, which I would fain bring back to its original signification of virtue, I mean good-nature, are of daily use : they are the bread of mankind, and staff of life : neither sighs, nor tears, nor groans, nor curses of the vanquished, follow acts of compassion, and of charity : but a sincere pleasure and serenity of mind, in him who per-



forms an action of mercy, which cannot suffer the misfortunes of another without redress, lest they should bring a kind of contagion along with them, and pollute the happiness which he enjoys.

Yet, since the perverse tempers of mankind, since oppression on one side, and ambition on the other, are sometimes the unavoidable occasion of war, that courage, that magnanimity, and resolution, which is born with you, cannot be too much commended: and here it grieves me that I am scantied in the pleasure of dwelling on many of my actions: but *Τρῶας αἰδέομαι* is an expression which Tully often used, when he would do what he dares not, and fears the censure of the Romans.

I have sometimes been forced to amplify on others; but here, where the subject is so fruitful that the harvest overcomes the reaper, I am shortened by my chain, and can only see what is forbidden me to reach; since it is not permitted me to commend you according to the extent of my wishes, and much less is it in my power to make my commendations equal to your merits. Yet, in this frugality of your praises, there are some things which I cannot omit without detracting from your character. You have so formed your own education as enables you to pay the debt you owe your country; or, more properly speaking, both your countries; because you were born, I may almost say in purple, at the castle of Dublin, when your grandfather was lord-lieutenant, and have since been bred in the court of England.

If this address had been in verse, I might have called you, as Claudian calls Mercury. “Numen commune, gemino faciens commercia mundo.” The better to satisfy this double obligation, you have early cultivated the genius you have to arms, that when the service of Britain or Ireland shall require your courage and your conduct, you may exert them both to the benefit of either country. You began in the cabinet what you afterwards practised in the camp: and thus both Lu.



cullus and Cæsar (to omit a crowd of shining Romans) formed themselves to war by the study of history, and by the examples of the greatest captains, both of Greece and Italy, before their time. I name those two commanders in particular, because they were better read in chronicle than any of the Roman leaders; and that Lucullus in particular, having only the theory of war from books, was thought fit, without practice, to be sent into the field against the most formidable enemy of Rome. Tully, indeed, was called the learned consul in derision; but then he was not born a soldier: his head was turned another way: when he read the *Tactics*, he was thinking on the bar, which was his field of battle. The knowledge of warfare is thrown away on a general who dares not make use of what he knows. I commend it only in a man of courage and resolution; in him it will direct his martial spirit, and teach him the way to the best victories, which are those that are least bloody, and which, though achieved by the hand, are managed by the head. Science distinguishes a man of honour from one of those athletic brutes whom, undeservedly, we call heroes. Cursed be the poet who first honoured with that name a mere Ajax, a man-killing idiot. The Ulysses of Ovid upbraids his ignorance, that he understood not the shield for which he pleaded: there were engraven on it plans of cities, and maps of countries, which Ajax could not comprehend, but looked on them as stupidly as his fellow-beast the lion. But, on the other side, your Grace has given yourself the education of his rival: you have studied every spot of ground in Flanders, which, for these ten years past, has been the scene of battles and of sieges. No wonder if you performed your part with such applause on a theatre which you understood so well.

If I designed this for a poetical encomium, it were easy to enlarge on so copious a subject; but, confining myself to the severity of truth, and to what is becoming me to say, I must not only pass over many instances of



your military skill, but also those of your assiduous diligence in the war: and of your personal bravery, attended with an ardent thirst of honour; a long train of generosity; profuseness of doing good; a soul unsatisfied with all it has done; and an unextinguished desire of doing more. But all this is matter for your own historian; I am, as Virgil says, "*Spatiis exclus iniquis.*"

Yet, not to be wholly silent of all your charities, I must stay a little on one action, which preferred the relief of others to the consideration of yourself. When, in the battle of Landen, your heat of courage (a fault only pardonable to your youth) had transported you so far before your friends, that they were unable to follow, much less to succour you: when you were not only dangerously, but in all appearance mortally wounded, when in that desperate condition you were made prisoner, and carried to Namur, at that time in possession of the French; then it was, my lord, that you took a considerable part of what was remitted to you of your own revenues, and, as a memorable instance of your heroic charity, put it into the hands of Count Guiscard, who was Governor of the place, to be distributed among your fellow prisoners. The French commander, charmed with the greatness of your soul, accordingly consigned it to the use for which it was intended by the donor: by which means the lives of so many miserable men were saved, and a comfortable provision made for their subsistence, who had otherwise perished, had not you been the companion of their misfortune; or rather sent by Providence, like another Joseph, to keep out famine from invading those whom in humility you called your brethren.—How happy was it for those poor creatures, that your Grace was made their fellow sufferer! and how glorious for you, that you chose to want, rather than not relieve the wants of others! The heathen poet, in commending the charity of Dido to the Trojans, spoke like a christian; "*Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere,*"



disco." All men, even those of a different interest and contrary principles, must praise this action, as the most eminent for piety, not only in this degenerate age, but almost in any of the former ; when men were made "*de meliore luto ;*" when examples of charity were frequent, and when they were in being, "*Teucric pulcherrima proles magnanimi heroes nati melioribus annis.*" No envy can detract from this : it will shine in history ; and, like swans, grow whiter the longer it endures : and the name of ORMOND will be more celebrated in his captivity, than in his greatest triumphs.

But all actions of your Grace are of a piece ; as waters keep the tenor of their fountains : your compassion is general, and has the same effect as well on enemies as friends. It is so much in your nature to do good, that your life is but one continued act of placing benefits on many, as the sun is always carrying his light to some part or other of the world : and were it not that your reason guides you were to give, I might almost say that you could not help bestowing more than is consistent with the fortune of a private man, or with the will of any but an Alexander.

What wonder is it then, that, being born for a blessing to mankind, your supposed death in that engagement was so generally lamented through the nation ! The concernment for it was as universal as the loss : and though the gratitude might be counterfeit in some, yet the tears of all were real : where every man deplored his private part in that calamity ; and even those who had not tasted of your favours, yet built so much on the fame of your beneficence, that they bemoaned the loss of their expectations

This brought the untimely death of your great father into fresh remembrance, as if the same decree had passed on two short successive generations of the virtuous ; and I repeated to myself the same verses which I had formerly applied to him : "*Ostendunt terris hunc tantùm fata, nec ultrà esse finunt.*" But to the joy not only of all good men, but of mankind in general



the unhappy omen took not place, you are still living to enjoy the blessings and applause of all the good you have performed, the prayers of multitudes whom you have obliged, for your long prosperity; and that your power of doing generous and charitable actions may be as extended as your will; which is by none more zealously desired than by

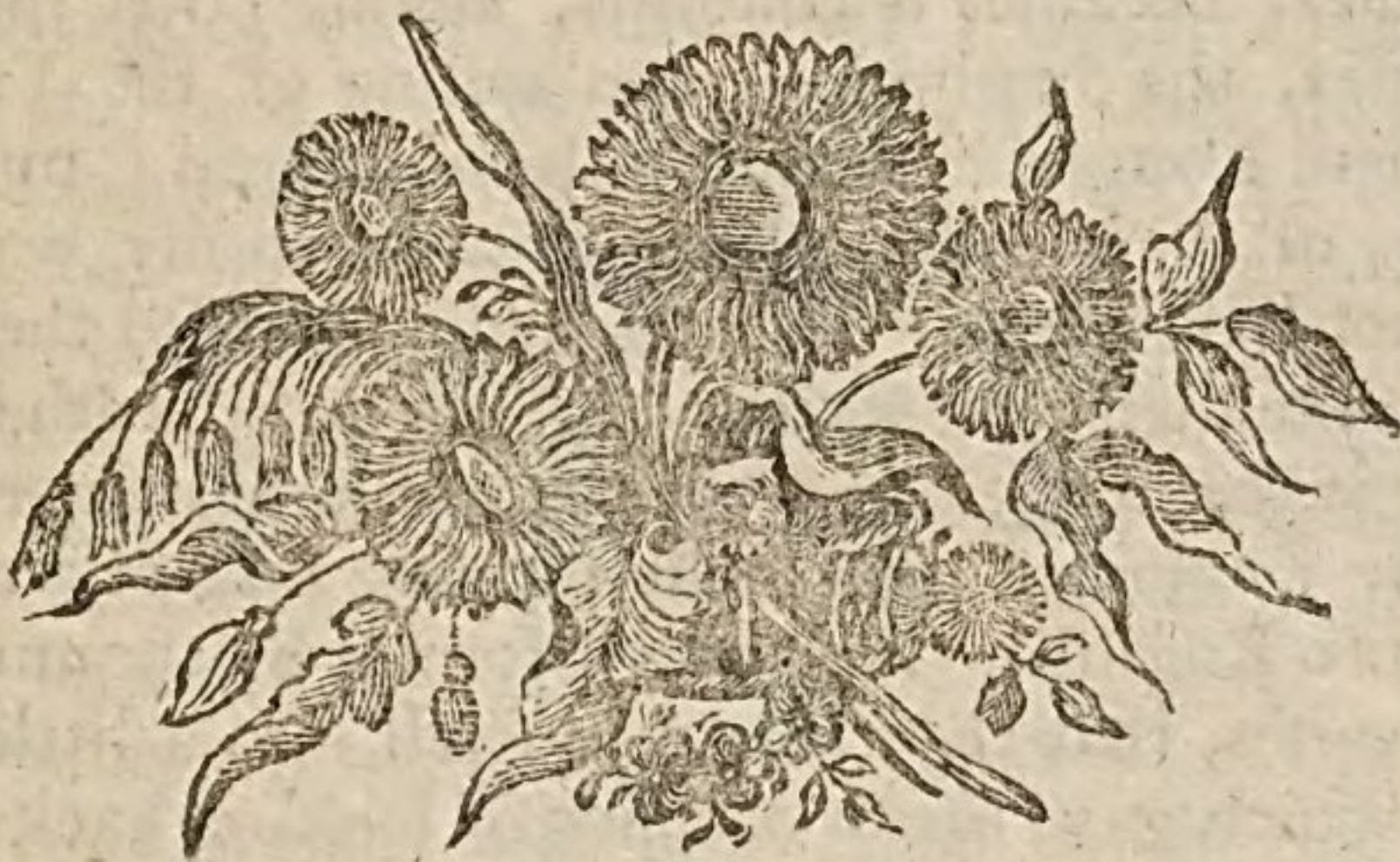
Your Grace's

Most humble,

Most obliged, and

Most obedient Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.





## PREFACE

### PREFIXED TO THE FABLES.

**I**T is with a poet as with a man who designs to build, and is very exact, as he supposes, in casting up the cost beforehand; but, generally speaking, he is mistaken in his account, and reckons short in the expence he at first intended: he alters his mind as the work proceeds, and will have this or that convenience more, of which he had not thought when he began.— So has it happened to me: I have built a house, where I intended but a lodge; yet with better success than a certain nobleman, who, beginning with a dog-kennel, never lived to finish the palace he had contrived.

From translating the first of Homer's Iliads (which I intended as an essay to the whole work) I proceeded to the translation of the twelfth book of Ovid's Metamorphoses, because it contains, among other things, the causes, the beginning, and ending of the Trojan war: here I ought in reason to have stopped; but the speeches of Ajax and Ulysses lying next in my way, I could not balk them. When I had compassed them, I was so taken with the former part of the fifteenth book (which is the master-piece of the whole Metamorphoses) that I enjoined myself the pleasing task of rendering it into English. And now I found, by the number of my verses, that they began to swell into a little volume: which gave me an occasion of looking backward on some beauties of my author, in his former books: there occurred to me the Hunting of the Boar, Cinyras and Myrrha, the good natured story of Baucis and Philemon, with the rest, which I hope I have translated closely enough, and given them the same turn of verse which they had in the original; and this, I may say without vanity, is not the talent of every poet: he who has arrived the nearest to it, is the ingenious and learned Sandys, the best versifier of the former age; if I may properly call it by that name which was the



former part of this concluding century. For Spenser and Fairfax both flourished in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; great masters in our language; and who saw much farther into the beauties of our numbers, than those who immediately followed them. Milton was the poetical son of Spenser, and Mr. Waller of Fairfax; for we have our lineal descents and clans, as well as other families: Spenser more than once insinuates, that the soul of Chaucer was transfused into his body; and that he was begotten by him two hundred years after his decease. Milton has acknowledged to me, that Spenser was his original; and many besides myself have heard our famous Waller own, that he derived the harmony of his numbers from the Godfrey of Bulloign, which was turned into English by Mr. Fairfax. But to return: having done with Ovid for this time, it came into my head that our old English poet Chaucer in many things resembled him, and that with no disadvantage on the side of the modern author, I shall endeavour to prove when I compare them: and as I am, and always have been, studious to promote the honour of my native country, so I soon resolved to put their merits to the trial, by turning some of the Canterbury tales into our own language, as it is now refined; for by this means both the poets being set in the same light, and dressed in the same English habit, story to be compared with story, a certain judgment may be made betwixt them, by the reader, without obtruding my opinion on him: or if I seem partial to my countryman, and predecessor in the laurel, the friends of antiquity are not few: and besides many of the learned, Ovid has almost all the beaux, and the whole fair sex, his declared patrons. Perhaps I have assumed somewhat more to myself than they allow me; because I have ventured to sum up the evidence: but the readers are the jury; and their privilege remains entire to decide according to the merits of the cause, or if they please, to bring it to another hearing, before some other court. In the mean time,



to follow the thread of my discourse (as thoughts, according to Mr. Hobbes have always some connexion) so from Chaucer I was led to think on Boccace, who was not only his contemporary, but also pursued the same studies; wrote novels in prose, and many works in verse; particularly is said to have invented the octave rhyme, or stanza of eight lines, which ever since has been maintained by all the Italian writers, who are, or at least assume the title of, Heroic Poets: he and Chaucer, among other things, had this in common that they refined their mother tongues; but with this difference, that Dante had begun to file their language, at least in verse, before the time of Boccace, who likewise received no little help from his master Petrarch. But the reformation of their prose was wholly owing to Boccace himself, who is yet the standard of purity in the Italian tongue; though many of his phrases are become obsolete, as in process of time it must needs happen. Chaucer (as you have formerly been told by our learned Mr. Rymer) first adorned and amplified our barren tongue from the Provencall, which was then the most polished of all the modern languages; but this subject has been copiously treated by that great critic, who deserves no little commendation from us his countrymen. For these reasons of time, and resemblance of genius in Chaucer and Boccace, I resolved to join them in my present work; to which I have added some original papers of my own; which, whether they are equal or inferior to my other poems, an author is the most improper judge; and therefore I leave them wholly to the mercy of the reader. I will hope the best, that they will not be condemned; but if they should, I have the excuse of an old gentleman, who, mounting on horseback before some ladies, when I was present, got up somewhat heavily, but desired of the fair spectators, that they would count fourscore and eight before they judged him. By the mercy of God, I am already come within twenty years of his number, a cripple in my limbs; but what decays are in my



mind, the reader must determine. I think myself as vigorous as ever in the faculties of my soul, excepting only my memory, which is not impaired to any great degree; and if I lose not more of it, I have no great reason to complain. What judgment I had, increases rather than diminishes; and thoughts, such as they are, come crowding in so fast upon me, that my only difficulty is to choose or to reject; to run them into verse, or to give them the other harmony of prose.—I have so long studied and practised both, that they are grown into a habit, and become familiar to me. In short, though I may lawfully plead some part of the old gentleman's excuse, yet I will reserve it till I think I have greater need, and ask no grains of allowance for the faults of this my present work, but those which are given of course to human frailty. I will not trouble my reader with the shortness of time in which I writ it, or the several intervals of sickness; they who think too well of their own performances, are apt to boast in their prefaces how little time their works have cost them; and what other business of more importance interfered; but the reader will be as apt to ask the question, why they allowed not a longer time to make their works more perfect, and why they had so despicable an opinion of their judges, as to thrust their undigested stuff upon them, as if they deserved no better?

With this account of my present undertaking, I conclude the first part of this discourse: in the second part, as at a second sitting, though I alter not the draught, I must touch the same features over again, and change the dead colouring of the whole. In general I will only say, that I have written nothing which favours of immorality or profaneness, at least, I am not conscious to myself of any such intention. If there happen to be found an irrelevant expression, or a thought too wanton, they are crept into my verses through my inadvertency; if the searchers find any in the cargo, let them be staved or forfeited, like contraband goods; at least, let their authors be answerable



for them, as being imported merchandise, and not my own manufacture. On the other side, I have endeavoured to choose such fables, both ancient and modern, as contain in each of them some instructive moral, which I could prove by induction, but the way is tedious; and they leap foremost into sight, without the reader's trouble of looking after them. I wish I could affirm with a safe conscience, that I had taken the same care in all my former writings; for it must be owned, that supposing verses are never so beautiful or pleasing, yet if they contain any thing which shocks religion, or good manners, they are at best, what Horace says of good numbers, without good sense, "*Versus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ.*" Thus far, I hope, I am right in court, without renouncing my other right of self-defence, where I have been wrongfully accused, and my sense wire-drawn into blasphemy or bawdry, as it has often been by a religious lawyer, in a late pleading against the stage; in which he mixes truth with falsehood, and has not forgotten the old rule of calumniating strongly, that something may remain.

I resume the thread of my discourse with the first of my translations, which was the first *Iliad* of Homer. If it shall please God to give me longer life, and moderate health, my intentions are to translate the whole *Ilias*; provided still that I meet with those encouragements from the public, which may enable me to proceed in my undertaking with some cheerfulness. And this I dare assure the world beforehand, that I have found, by trial, Homer a more pleasing task than Virgil (though I say not the translation will be less laborious): for the Grecian is more according to my genius than the Latin poet. In the works of the two authors we may read their manners, and natural inclinations, which are wholly different. Virgil was of a quiet, sedate temper; Homer was violent, impetuous, and full of fire. The chief talent of Virgil was propriety of thoughts, and ornament of words: Homer was rapid in his thoughts, and took all the liberties both



of numbers and of expressions, which his language, and the age in which he lived, allowed him : Homer's invention was more copious, Virgil's more confined : so that if Homer had not led the way, it was not in Virgil to have begun heroic poetry : for nothing can be more evident, than that the Roman poem is but the second part of Ilias ; a continuation of the same story : and the persons already formed : the manners of Æneas are those of Hector superadded to those which Homer gave him. The adventures of Ulysses in the Odyssæis are imitated in the first six books of Virgil's Æneis : and though the accidents are not the same (which would have argued him of a servile copying, and total barrenness of invention) yet the seas were the same, in which both the heroes wandered, and Dido cannot be denied to be the poetical daughter of Calypso. The six latter books of Virgil's poem, are the four and twenty Iliads contracted : a quarrel occasioned by a lady, a single combat, battles fought, and a town besieged. I say not this in derogation to Virgil, neither do I contradict any thing which I have formerly said in his just praise : for his Episodes are almost wholly of his own invention ; and the form which he has given to the telling, makes the tale his own, even though the original story had been the same. But this proves, however, that Homer taught Virgil to design : and if invention be the first virtue of an epic poet, then the Latin poem can only be allowed the second place. Mr. Hobbes, in the preface to his own bald translation of the Ilias, (studying poetry, as he did mathematics, when it was too late) Mr. Hobbes, I say, begins the praise of Homer where he should have ended it. He tells us, that the first beauty of an epic poem consists in diction, that is, in the choice of words, and harmony of numbers : now, the words are the colouring of the work, which in the order of nature is last to be considered. The design, the disposition, the manners, and the thoughts, are all before it : where any of those are wanting, or imperfect,



so much wants or is imperfect in the imitation of human life; which is in the very definition of a poem. Words indeed, like glaring colours, are the first beauties that arise, and strike the sight: but if the draught be false or lame, the figures ill-disposed, the manners obscure or inconsistent, or the thoughts unnatural, then the finest colours are but daubing, and the piece is a beautiful monster at the best. Neither Virgil nor Homer were deficient in any of the former beauties; but in this last, which is expression, the Roman poet is at least equal to the Grecian, as I have said elsewhere; supplying the poverty of his language by his musical ear, and by his diligence. But to return: our two great poets, being so different in their tempers, one cholic and sanguine, the other phlegmatic and melancholic; that which makes them excel in their several ways, is, that each has followed his own natural inclination, as well in forming the design, as in the execution of it. The very heroes shew their authors; Achilles is hot, impatient, revengeful; “*Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,*” &c. Æneas patient, considerate, careful of his people, and merciful to his enemies: ever submissive to the will of heaven, “*quo fata trahunt, retrahunque, sequamur.*” I could please myself with enlarging on this subject, but I am forced to defer it to a fitter time. From all I have said, I will only draw this inference, that the action of Homer being more full of vigour than that of Virgil, according to the temper of the writer, is of consequence more pleasing to the reader. One warms you by degrees; the other sets you on fire all at once, and never intermits his heat. It is the same difference which Longinus makes betwixt the effects of eloquence in Demosthenes and Tully. One persuades; the other commands. You never cool while you read Homer, even not in the second book (a graceful flattery to his countrymen); but he hastens from the ships, and concludes not that book till he has made you an amends by the violent playing of a new machine. From thence he hurries



on his action with variety of events, and ends it in less compass than two months. This vehemence of his, I confess, is more suitable to my temper; and therefore I have translated his first book with greater pleasure than any part of Virgil: but it was not a pleasure without pains: the continual agitations of the spirits must needs be a weakening of any constitution, especially in age; and many pauses are required for refreshment betwixt the heats; the *Iliad* of itself being a third part longer than all Virgil's works together.

This is what I thought needful in this place to say of Homer. I proceed to Ovid and Chaucer, considering the former only in relation to the latter. With Ovid ended the golden age of the Roman tongue; from Chaucer the purity of the English tongue began. The manners of the poets were not unlike: both of them were well-bred, well-natured, amorous, and libertine, at least in their writings, it may be also in their lives. Their studies were the same, philosophy and philology. Both of them were known in astronomy, of which Ovid's books of the Roman feasts, and Chaucer's treatise of the *Astrolabe*, are sufficient witnesses. But Chaucer was likewise an astrologer, as were Virgil, Horace, Persius, and Manilius. Both writ with wonderful facility and clearness: neither were great inventors: for Ovid only copied the Grecian fables; and most of Chaucer's stories were taken from his Italian contemporaries, or their predecessors. Boccace's *Decameron* was first published; and from thence our Englishman has borrowed many of his *Canterbury tales*; yet that of *Palamon and Arcite* was written in all probability by some Italian wit, in a former age, as I shall prove hereafter: the tale of *Grizild* was the invention of Petrarch, by him sent to Boccace, from whom it came to Chaucer: *Troilus and Cressida* was also written by a Lombard author; but much amplified by our English translator, as well as beautified; the genius of our countrymen in general being rather to improve an invention than to invent themselves; as is



evident not only in our poetry, but in many of our manufactures. I find I have anticipated already, and taken up from Boccace before I come to him; but there is so much less behind; and I am of the temper of most kings, who love to be in debt; are all for present money, no matter how they pay it afterwards; besides, the nature of a preface is rambling; never wholly out of the way, nor in it. This I have learned from the practice of honest Montaign, and return at my pleasure to Ovid and Chaucer, of whom I have little more to say. Both of them built on the inventions of other men; yet since Chaucer had something of his own, as the Wife of Bath's Tale, the Cock and the Fox, which I have translated, and some others, I may justly give our countryman the precedence in that part, since I can remember nothing of Ovid which was wholly his. Both of them understood the manners, under which name I comprehend the passions, and, in a larger sense, the descriptions of persons, and their very habits; for an example, I see Baucis and Philemon as perfectly before me, as if some ancient painter had drawn them; and all the pilgrims in the Canterbury tales, their humours, their features, and the very dress, as distinctly as if I had supped with them at the Tabard in Southwark: yet even there too the figures in Chaucer are much more lively, and set in a better light; which though I have not time to prove, yet I appeal to the reader, and am sure he will clear me from partiality. The thoughts and words remain to be considered in the comparison of the two poets; and I have saved myself one part of that labour, by owning that Ovid lived when the Roman tongue was in its meridian; Chaucer, in the dawning of our language: therefore that part of the comparison stands not on an equal foot, no more than the diction of Ennius and Ovid, or of Chaucer and our present English. The words are given up as a post not to be defended in our poet, because he wanted the modern art of fortifying. The thoughts remain to be considered: and they are



to be measured only by their propriety ; that is, as they flow more or less naturally from the persons described, on such and such occasions. The vulgar judges, which are nine parts in ten of all nations, who call conceits and jingles wit, who see Ovid full of them, and Chaucer altogether without them, will think me little less than mad, for preferring the Englishman to the Roman : yet, with their leave, I must presume to say, that the things they admire are not only glittering trifles, and so far from being witty, that in a serious poem, they are nauseous, because they are unnatural. Would any man, who is ready to die for love, describe his passion like Narcissus ? Would he think of “ *inopem me copia fecit*,” and a dozen more of such expressions, poured on the neck of one another, and signifying all the same thing ? If this were wit, was this a time to be witty, when the poor wretch was in the agony of death ! This is just John Littlewit in Bartholomew fair, who had a conceit (as he tells you) left him in his misery ; a miserable conceit. On these occasions the poet should endeavour to raise pity : but instead of this Ovid is tickling you with a laugh. Virgil never made use of such machines when he was moving you to commiserate the death of Dido : he would not destroy what he was building. Chaucer makes Arcite violent in his love, and unjust in the pursuit of it : yet when he came to die, he made him think more reasonably : he repents not of his love, for that had altered his character : but acknowledges the injustice of his proceedings, and resigns Emilia to Palamon. What would Ovid have done on this occasion ? He would certainly have made Arcite witty on his death bed. He had complained he was farther off from possession from being so near, and a thousand such boyisms, which Chaucer rejected as below the dignity of the subject. They who think otherwise, would by the same reason prefer Lucan and Ovid to Homer and Virgil, and Martial to all four of them. As for the turn of words, in which Ovid particularly excels all poets, they are sometimes



a fault, and sometimes a beauty, as they are used properly or improperly ; but in strong passions always to be shunned, because passions are serious, and will admit no playing. The French have a high value for them, and I confess they are often what they call delicate, when they are introduced with judgment ; but Chaucer writ with more simplicity, and followed nature more closely, than to use them. I have thus far, to the best of my knowledge, been an upright judge between the parties in competition, not meddling with the design nor the disposition of it ; because the design was not their own ; and in the disposing of it they were equal. It remains that I say somewhat of Chaucer in particular.

In the first place, as he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil : he is a perpetual fountain of good sense ; learned in all sciences ; and therefore speaks properly on all subjects : as he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off ; a continence which is practised by few writers, and scarcely by any of the ancients, excepting Virgil and Horace. One of our late great poets is sunk in his reputation, because he could never forgive any conceit which came in his way, but swept, like a drag-net, great and small. There was plenty enough, but the dishes were ill sorted : whole pyramids of sweet-meats for boys and women, but little of solid meat, for men : all this proceeded not from any want of knowledge, but of judgment ; neither did he want that in discerning the beauties and faults of other poets ; but only indulged himself in the luxury of writing ; and perhaps knew it was a fault, but hoped the reader would not find it. For this reason, though he must always be thought a great poet, he is no longer esteemed a good writer ; and for ten impressions, which his works have had in so many successive years, yet at present a hundred books are scarcely purchased in a twelve-month : for, as my last Lord Rochester said, though



somewhat profanely, Not being of God it could no stand.

Chaucer followed nature every where ; but was never so bold as to go beyond her ; and there is a great difference of being Poeta and nimis Poeta, if we believe Catullus, as much as betwixt a modest behaviour and affectation. The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us ; but it is like the eloquence of one whom Tacitus commends, it was “*auribus istius temporis accommodata* :” they who lived with him, and some time after him, thought it musical. and it continues so even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lidgate and Gower, his contemporaries : there is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect. It is true I cannot go so far as he who published the last edition of him ; for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten syllables in a verse where we find but nine ; but this opinion is not worth confuting ; it is so gross and obvious an error, that common sense (which is a rule in every thing but matters of faith and revelation) must convince the reader, that equality of numbers in every verse, which we call heroic, was either not known, or not always practised, in Chaucer’s age. It were an easy matter to produce some thousands of his verses which are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no pronounciation can make otherwise. We can only say, that he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at the first. We must be children before we grow men. There was an Ennius, and in process of time a Lucilius and a Lucretius, before Virgil and Horace ; even after Chaucer, there was a Spenser, a Harrington, a Fairfax, before Waller and Denham were in being ; and our numbers were in their nonage till these last appeared. I need say little of his parentage, life, and fortunes ; they are to be found at large in all the editions of his works. He was employed abroad, and favoured by Edward



the Third, Richard the Second, and Henry the Fourth, and was poet, as I suppose, to all three of them. In Richard's time, I doubt he was a little dipped in the rebellion of the commons; and, being brother-in-law to John of Gaunt, it was no wonder if he followed the fortunes of that family; and was well with Henry the Fourth when he had deposed his predecessor. Neither is it to be admired, that Henry, who was a wise, as well as a valiant prince, who claimed by succession, and was sensible that his title was not sound, but was rightfully in Mortimer, who had married the heir of York; it was not to be admired, I say, if that great politician should be pleased to have the greatest wit of those times in his interest, and to be the trumpet of his praises. Augustus had given him the example, by the advice of Mæcenas, who recommended Virgil and Horace to him, whose praises helped to make him popular while he was alive, and after his death have made him precious to posterity. As for the Religion of our poet, he seems to have some little bias towards the opinions of Wickliff, after John of Gaunt his patron; somewhat of which appears in the tale of Pier Plowman: yet I cannot blame him for inveighing so sharply against the vices of the clergy in his age: their pride, their ambition, their pomp, their avarice, their worldly interest, deserved the lashes which he gave them, both in that and in most of his Canterbury tales: neither has his contemporary Boccace spared them.— Yet both these poets lived in much esteem with good and holy men in orders; for the scandal which is given by particular priests reflects not on the sacred function. Chaucer's Monk, his Chanon, and his Fryer, took not from the character of his Good Parson. A satirical poet is the check of the laymen on bad priests. We are only to take care that we involve not the innocent with the guilty in the same condemnation. The good cannot be too much honoured, nor the bad too coarsely used; for the corruption of the best becomes the worst. When a clergyman is whipped, his gown is first taken



off, by which the dignity of his order is secured : if he be wrongfully accused, he has his action of slander ; and it is at the poet's peril if he transgress the law.— But they will tell us, that all kinds of satire, though never so well deserved by particular priests, yet brings the whole order into contempt. Is then the peerage of England any thing dishonoured, when a peer suffers for his treason ? If he be libelled, or any way defamed, he has his “*Scandulum Magnatum*,” to punish the offender. They who use this kind of argument, seem to be conscious to themselves of somewhat which has deserved the poet's lash ; and are less concerned for their public capacity than for their private ; at least there is pride at the bottom of their reasoning. If the faults of men in orders are all only to be judged among themselves, they are in some sort parties ; for, since they say the honour of their order is concerned in every member of it, how can we be sure that they will be impartial judges ? How far I may be allowed to speak my opinion in this case I know not ; but I am sure a dispute of this nature caused mischief in abundance betwixt a king of England and an archbishop of Canterbury ; one standing up for the laws of his land, and the other for the honour (as he called it) of God's church ; which ended in the murder of the prelate, and in the whipping of his majesty from post to pillar for his penance. The learned and ingenious Dr. Drake has saved me the labour of inquiring into the esteem and reverence which the priests have had of old ; and I would rather extend than diminish any part of it : yet I must needs say, that when a priest provokes me without any occasion given him, I have no reason, unless it be the charity of a christian, to forgive him. “*Prior læsit*” is justification sufficient in the civil law. If I answer him in his own language, self-defence I am sure must be allowed me ; and if I carry it farther, even to a sharp recrimination, somewhat may be indulged to human frailty. Yet my resentment has not wrought so far but that I have followed Chaucer in his charac-



ter of a holy man, and have enlarged on that subject with some pleasure, reserving to myself the right, if I shall think fit hereafter, to describe another sort of priests, such as are more easily to be found than the good parson; such as have given the last blow to christianity in this age, by a practice so contrary to their doctrine. But this will keep cold till another time.— In the mean while, I take up Chaucer where I left him. He must have been a man of a most wonderful comprehensive nature, because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the compass of his Canterbury Tales the various manners and humours (as we now call them) of the whole English nation, in his age. Not a single character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other; and, not only in their inclinations, but in their physiognomies and persons. Baptista Porta could not have described their natures better than by the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and manner of their tales, and of their telling, are so suited to their different educations, humours, and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of gravity: their discourses are such as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding; such as are becoming of them, and them only. Some of his persons are vicious, and some are virtuous; some are unlearned, or (as Chaucer calls them) lewd, and some are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is different: the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are several men, and distinguished from each other, as much as the mincing lady prioress, and the broad-speaking gape-tooth'd wife of Bath. But enough of this: there is such a variety of game springing up before me, that I am distracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. It is sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that here is God's plenty. We have our forefathers and great grandames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days: their general characters



are still remaining in mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other names than those of Monks and Friars, and Chanons, and Lady Abeſſes, and Nuns; for mankind is ever the ſame, and nothing loſt out of Nature, though every thing is altered. May I live to do myſelf the juſtice, (ſince my enemies will do me none, and are ſo far from granting me to be a good poet, that they will not allow me ſo much as to be a chriſtian, or a moral man) may I have leave, I ſay, to inform my reader, that I have confined my choice to ſuch tales of Chaucer as favour nothing of immodesty. If I had deſired more to pleaſe than to inſtruct, the Reeve, the Millar, the Shipman, the Merchants, the Summer, and, above all, the Wife of Bath, in the prologue to her tale, would have procured me as many friends and readers as there are beaux and ladies of pleaſure in the town. But I will no more offend againſt good manners; I am ſenſible, as I ought to be, of the ſcandal I have given by my looſe writings; and make what reparation I am able by this public acknowledgment. If any thing of this nature, or of profaneneſs, be crept into theſe poems, I am ſo far from defending it, that I diſown it. “*Totum hoc indic-tum volo.*” Chaucer makes another manner of apology for his broad ſpeaking, and Boccace makes the like; but I will follow neither of them. Our countryman, in the end of his characters, before the Canterbury Tales, thus excuſes the ribaldry which is very groſs in many of his novels.

But firſt, I pray you of your courteſy,  
That ye ne arrettee it nought my villany,  
Though that I plainly ſpeak in this mattere  
To tellen you her words, and eke her chere:  
Ne though I ſpeak her words properly,  
For this ye knowen as well as I,  
Who ſhall tellen a tale after a man,  
He mote rehearſe as nye as ever he can:  
Everich word of it been in his charge,  
All ſpeke he, never ſo rudely, ne large.



Or else he mote tellen his tale untrue,  
 Or feine things, or find words new :  
 He may not spare, although he were his brother,  
 He mote as well say o word as another.  
 Christ spake himself full broad in holy writ,  
 And well I wote ne villany is it,  
 Eke Plato saith, who so can him rede,  
 The words mote been coufin to the dede.

Yet if a man should have inquired of Boccace, or of Chaucer, what need they had of introducing such characters, where obscene words were proper in their mouths, but very indecent to be heard, I know not what answer they would have made : for that reason, such tale shall be left untold by me. You have here a specimen of Chaucer's language, which is so obsolete that his sense is scarce to be understood : and you have likewise more than one example of his unequal numbers, which were mentioned before. Yet many of his verses consist of ten syllables, and the words not much behind our present English ; as, for example, these two lines in the description of the carpenter's young wife :

Wincing she was, as is a jolly colt,  
 Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.

I have almost done with Chaucer, when I have answered some objections relating to my present work. I find some people are offended that I have turned these tales into modern English ; because they think them unworthy of my pains, and look on Chaucer as a dry, old-fashioned wit, not worthy reviving. I have often heard the late Earl of Leicester say, that Mr. Cowley himself was of that opinion ; who, having read him over at my lord's request, declared he had no taste of him. I dare not advance my opinion against the judgment of so great an author ; but I think it fair, however, to leave the decision to the public : Mr. Cowley was too modest to set up for a dictator ; and being shocked perhaps with his old style, never examined into the depth of his good sense. Chaucer, I confess, is a rough diamond, and must first



be polished, ere he shines. I deny not likewise, that, living in our early days of poetry, he writes not always of a piece; but sometimes mingles trivial things with those of greater moment. Sometimes also, though not often, he runs riot, like Ovid, and knows not when he has said enough. But there are more great wits besides Chaucer, whose fault is their excess of conceits, and those ill sorted. An author is not to write all he can, but only all he ought. Having observed this redundancy in Chaucer (as it is an easy matter for a man of ordinary parts to find a fault in one of greater) I have not tied myself to a literal translation, but have often omitted what I judged unnecessary, or not of dignity enough to appear in the company of better thoughts. I have presumed farther in some places, and added somewhat of my own where I thought my author was deficient, and had not given his thoughts their true lustre, for want of words in the beginning of our language. And to this I was the more emboldened because (if I may be permitted to say it of myself) I found I had a soul congenial to his, and that I had been conversant in the same studies.—Another poet, in another age, may take the same liberty with my writings, if at least they live long enough to deserve correction. It was also necessary sometimes to restore the sense of Chaucer, which was lost or mangled in the errors of the press; let this example suffice at present; in the story of Palamon and Arcite, where the temple of Diana is described, you find these verses in all the editions of our author:

There saw I Danê turned into a tree,  
I mean not the goddess Diane,  
But Venus daughter, which that hight Danê.

Which, after a little consideration, I knew was to be reformed into this sense, that Daphne the daughter of Peneus was turned into a tree. I durst not make thus bold with Ovid, lest some future Milbourn should



arise, and say, I varied from my author, because I understood him not.

But there are other judges who think I ought not to have translated Chaucer into English, out of a quite contrary notion : they suppose there is a certain veneration due to his old language, and that it is little less than profanation and sacrilege to alter it. They are farther of opinion, that somewhat of his good sense will suffer in this transfusion, and much of the beauty of his thoughts will infallibly be lost, which appear with more grace in their old habit. Of this opinion was that excellent person whom I mentioned, the late Earl of Leicester, who valued Chaucer as much as Mr. Cowley despised him. My Lord dissuaded me from this attempt, (for I was thinking of it some years before his death) and his authority prevailed so far with me, as to defer my undertaking while he lived, in deference to him : yet my reason was not convinced with what he urged against it. If the first end of a writer be to be understood, then, as his language grows obsolete, thoughts must grow obscure :

“ Multa renascentur quæ jam cecidere ; cadentque,  
 “ Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula ; si volet usus,  
 “ Quem penes arbitrium est, & jus, & norma loquendi.”

When an ancient word, for its sound and significancy deserves to be revived, I have that reasonable veneration for antiquity, to restore it. All beyond this is superstition. Words are not like landmarks, so sacred as never to be removed ; customs are changed ; and even statutes are silently repealed, when the reason ceases for which they were enacted. As for the other part of the argument, that his thoughts will lose of their original beauty, by the innovation of words ; in the first place, not only their beauty, but their being is lost, where they are no longer understood, which is the present case. I grant that something must be lost in all transfusion, that is, in all translations ; but the sense will remain, which would otherwise be lost, or



at least be maimed, when it is scarce intelligible; and that but to a few. How few are there who can read Chaucer, so as to understand him perfectly! And if imperfectly, then with less profit, and no pleasure. It is not for the use of some old Saxon friends, that I have taken these pains with him: let them neglect my version, because they have no need of it. I made it for their sakes who understood sense and poetry as well as they, when that poetry and sense is put into words which they understand. I will go farther, and dare to add, that what beauties I lose in some places, I give to others which had them not originally: but in this I may be partial to myself; let the reader judge, and I submit to his decision. Yet I think I have just occasion to complain of them, who, because they understand Chaucer, would deprive the greater part of their countrymen of the same advantage, and hoard him up, as misers to their grandam gold, only to look on it themselves; and hinder others from making use of it. In sum, I seriously protest, that no man ever had, or can have, a greater veneration for Chaucer than myself. I have translated some part of his works, only that I might perpetuate his memory, or at least refresh it, amongst my countrymen. If I have altered him any where for the better, I must at the same time acknowledge, that I could have done nothing without him: "*Facile est inventis*" "*addere*," is no great commendation; and I am not so vain to think I have deserved a greater. I will conclude what I have to say of him singly, with this one remark: a lady of my acquaintance, who keeps a kind of correspondence with some authors of the fair sex in France, has been informed by them, that Mademoiselle de Scudery, who is as old as Sibyl, and inspired like her by the same god of poetry, is at this time translating Chaucer into modern French. From which I gather, that he has been formerly translated into the old Provençal (for how she should come to understand old English I know not). But the matter



of fact being true, it makes me think that there is something in it like fatality; that, after certain periods of time, the fame and memory of great wits should be renewed, as Chaucer is both in France and England. If this be wholly chance, it is extraordinary, and I dare not call it more, for fear of being taxed with superstition.

Boccace comes last to be considered, who, living in the same age with Chaucer, had the same genius, and followed the same studies; both writ novels, and each of them cultivated his mother tongue. But the greatest resemblance of our two modern authors being in their familiar style, and pleasing way of relating comical adventures, I may pass it over, because I have translated nothing from Boccace of that nature. In the serious part of poetry the advantage is wholly on Chaucer's side; for though the Englishman has borrowed many tales from the Italian, yet it appears that those of Boccace were not generally of his own making, but taken from authors of former ages, and by him only modelled; so that what there was of invention in either of them may be judged equal. But Chaucer has refined on Boccace, and has mended the stories which he has borrowed in his way of telling, though prose allows more liberty of thought, and the expression is more easy when unconfined by numbers. Our countryman carries weight, and yet wins the race at a disadvantage. I desire not the reader should take my word; and therefore I will set two of their discourses on the same subject in the same light, for every man to judge betwixt them. I translated Chaucer first, and amongst the rest, pitched on the Wife of Bath's tale; not daring, as I have said, to adventure on her prologue, because it is too licentious: there Chaucer introduces an old woman of mean parentage, whom a youthful knight of noble blood was forced to marry, and consequently loathed her: the crone being in bed with him on the wedding-night, and finding his aversion, endeavours to win his affection by reason, and



speaks a good word for herself (as who could blame her?) in hope to mollify the sullen bridegroom. She takes her topics from the benefits of poverty, the advantages of old age and ugliness, the vanity of youth, and the silly pride of ancestry and titles, without inherent virtue, which is the true nobility. When I had closed Chaucer, I returned to Ovid, and translated some more of his fables; and by this time had so far forgotten the Wife of Bath's tale, that when I took up Boccace, unawares I fell on the same argument of preferring virtue to nobility of blood and titles, in the story of Sigismunda; which I had certainly avoided for the resemblance of the two discourses, if my memory had not failed me. Let the reader weigh them both, and if he thinks me partial to Chaucer, it is in him to right Boccace.

I prefer in our countryman, far above all his other stories, the noble poem of Palamon and Arcite, which is of the epic kind, and perhaps not much inferior to the Ilias or the Æneis: the story is more pleasing than either of them, the manners as perfect, the diction as poetical, the learning as deep and various, and the disposition full as artful, only it includes a greater length of time, as taking up seven years at least; but Aristotle has left undecided the duration of the action, which yet is easily reduced into the compass of a year, by a narration of what preceded the return of Palamon to Athens. I had thought, for the honour of our nation, and more particularly for his, whose laurel, though unworthy, I have worn after him, that this story was of English growth, and Chaucer's own; but I was undeceived by Boccace; for casually looking on the end of his seventh Giornata, I found Dioneo (under which name he shadows himself) and Fiametta (who represents his mistress the natural daughter of Robert king of Naples) of whom these words are spoken. "*Dioneo e la Fiametta granpezza contarono insieme d'Arcita, e di Palamone:*" by which it appears that this story was written before the time of Boccace;



but the name of its author being wholly lost, Chaucer is now become an original; and I question not but the poem has received many beauties by passing through his noble hands. Besides this tale, there is another of his own invention, after the manner of the Provençals, called the Flower and the Leaf; with which I was so particularly pleased, both for the invention and the moral, that I cannot hinder myself from recommending it to the reader.

As a corollary to this preface, in which I have done justice to others, I owe somewhat to myself; not that I think it worth my time to enter the lists with one Milbourn, and one Blackmore, but barely to take notice, that such men there are who have written scurrilously against me, without any provocation. Milbourn, who is in orders, pretends, amongst the rest, this quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul on priesthood: if I have, I am only to ask pardon of good priests, and I am afraid his part of the reparation will come to little. Let him be satisfied that he shall not be able to force himself upon me for an adversary. I condemn him too much to enter into competition with him. His own translations of Virgil have answered his criticisms on mine. If (as they say he has declared in print) he prefers the version of Ogilby to mine, the world has made him the same compliment; for it is agreed on all hands, that he writes even below Ogilby: that, you will say, is not easily to be done; but what cannot Milbourn bring about? I am satisfied, however, that while he and I live together, I shall not be thought the worst poet of the age. It looks as if I had desired him underhand to write so ill against me; but, upon my honest word, I have not bribed him to do me this service, and am wholly guiltless of his pamphlet. It is true, I should be glad if I could persuade him to continue his good offices, and write such another critique on any thing of mine; for I find by experience he has a great stroke with the reader, when he condemns any of my poems, to make the world have a better opinion of them. He has taken some pains



with my poetry ; but nobody will be persuaded to take the same with his. If I had taken to the church (as he affirms, but which never was in my thoughts) I should have had more sense, if not more grace, than to have turned myself out of my benefice by writing libels on my parishioners. But his account of my manners and my principles are of a piece with his cavils and his poetry ; and so I have done with him for ever.

As for the City Bard, or Knight Physician, I hear his quarrel to me is, that I was the author of *Abfalom* and *Achithophel*, which he thinks is a little hard on his fanatic patrons in London.

But I will deal the more civilly with his two poems, because nothing ill is to be spoken of the dead ; and therefore peace be to the manes of his *Arthurs*. I will only say, that it was not for this noble knight that I drew the plan of an epic poem on King Arthur, in my preface to the translation of *Juvenal*. The guardian angels of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage, and therefore he rejected them, as *Dares* did the whirlbats of *Eryx*, when they were thrown before him by *Entellus*. Yet from that preface he plainly took the hint, for he began immediately upon the story, though he had the baseness not to acknowledge his benefactor, but, instead of it, to traduce me in a libel.

I shall say the less of Mr. Collier, because in many things he has taxed me justly ; and I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts and expressions of mine, which can be truly argued of obscenity, profaneness, or immorality, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph ; if he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance. It becomes me not to draw my pen in defence of a bad cause, when I have so often drawn it for a good one. Yet it were not difficult to prove, that in many places he has perverted my meaning by his glosses ; and interpreted my words into blasphemy and baudry, of which they were not guilty ; besides that, he is too much given to horse-play in his raillery,



and comes to battle like a dictator from the plough. I will not say, The zeal of God's house has eaten him up; but I am sure it has devoured some part of his good manners and civility. It might also be doubted whether it were altogether zeal, which prompted him to this rough manner of proceeding; perhaps it became not one of his function to rake into the rubbish of ancient and modern plays: a divine might have employed his pains to better purpose, than in the nastiness of Plautus and Aristophanes; whose examples, as they excuse not me, so it might be possibly supposed, that he read them not without some pleasure. They who have written commentaries on those poets, or on Horace, Juvenal, and Martial, have explained some vices, which without their interpretation had been unknown to modern times. Neither has he judged impartially betwixt the former age and us.

There is more baudry in one play of Fletcher's, called the Custom of the Country, than in all ours together. Yet this has been often acted on the stage in my remembrance. Are the times so much more reformed now, than they were five and twenty years ago? If they are, I congratulate the amendment of our morals. But I am not to prejudice the cause of my fellow-poets, though I abandon my own defence: they have some of them answered for themselves, and neither they nor I can think Mr. Collier so formidable an enemy, that we should shun him. He has lost ground at the latter end of the day, by pursuing his point too far, like the Prince of Condé at the battle of Senneph: from immoral plays, to no plays; "*ab abusu ad usum, non valet consequentia.*" But being a party, I am not to erect myself into a judge. As for the rest of those who have written against me, they are such scoundrels, that they deserve not the least notice to be taken of them. Blackmore and Milbourn are only distinguished from the crowd, by being remembered to their infamy.

———"Demetri, Teque Tigelli  
 "Discipulorum inter jubeo plotare cathedras."



# PALAMON AND ARCITE :

OR

## THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

### BOOK I.

**I**N days of old, there liv'd, of mighty fame,  
 A valiant prince, and Theseus was his name :  
 A chief who more in feats of arms excell'd,  
 The rising nor the setting sun beheld.  
 Of Athens he was lord ; much land he won, 5  
 And added foreign countries to his crown.  
 In Scythia with the warrior queen he strove,  
 Whom first by force he conquer'd, then by love ;  
 He brought in triumph back the beauteous dame,  
 With whom her sister, fair Emilia, came. 10  
 With honour to his home let Theseus ride,  
 With love to friend, and fortune for his guide,  
 And his victorious army at his side.  
 I pass their warlike pomp, their proud array,  
 Their shouts, their songs, their welcome on the way :  
 But, were it not too long, I would recite 16  
 The feats of Amazons, the fatal fight  
 Betwixt the hardy queen and hero knight :  
 The town besieg'd, and how much blood it cost  
 The female army and th' Athenian host ; 20  
 The spousals of Hippolita the queen ;  
 What tilts and tourneys at the feast were seen ;  
 The storm at their return, the ladies fear :  
 But these, and other things, I must forbear.  
 The field is spacious I design to sow, 25  
 With oxen far unfit to draw the plough :  
 The remnant of my tale is of a length  
 To tire your patience, and to waste my strength ;  
 And trivial accidents shall be forborne,  
 That others may have time to take their turn : 30  
 As was at first enjoin'd us by mine host :  
 That he whose tale is best, and pleases most,  
 Should win his supper at our common cost.  
 And therefore, where I left, I will pursue  
 This ancient story, whether false or true, 35  
 In hope it may be mended with a new.



The prince I mentioned, full of high renown,  
 In this array drew near th' Athenian town ;  
 When in his pomp and utmost of his pride,  
 Marching he chanc'd to cast his eye aside, 40  
 And saw a choir of mourning dames, who lay  
 By two and two across the common way ;  
 At his approach they rais'd a rueful cry,  
 And beat their breasts, and held their hands on high,  
 Creeping and crying, till they seiz'd at last 45  
 His courser's bridle, and his feet embrac'd.

Tell me, said Theseus, what and whence you are,  
 And why this funeral pageant you prepare ?  
 Is this the welcome of my worthy deeds,  
 To meet my triumph in ill-omen'd weeds ? 50  
 Or envy you my praise, and would destroy  
 With grief my pleasures, and pollute my joy ?  
 Or are you injur'd, and demand relief ?  
 Name your request, and I will ease your grief.

The most in years of all the mourning train 55  
 Began (but swooned first away for pain) ;  
 Then scarce recover'd spoke : nor envy we  
 Thy great renown, nor grudge thy victory ;  
 'Tis thine, O king, th' afflicted to redress,  
 And fame has fill'd the world with thy success ; 60  
 We wretched women sue for that alone,  
 Which of thy goodness is refus'd to none ;  
 Let fall some drops of pity on our grief,  
 If what we beg be just, and we deserve relief :  
 For none of us, who now thy grace implore, 65  
 But held the rank of sov'reign queen before ;  
 Till, thanks to giddy chance, which never bears  
 That mortal bliss should last for length of years,  
 She cast us headlong from our high estate,  
 And here in hope of thy return we wait : 70  
 And long have waited in the temple nigh,  
 Built to the gracious goddess Clemency.  
 But reverence thou the power, whose name it bears,  
 Relieve th' oppress'd, and wipe the widow's tears ;  
 I, wretched I, have other fortune seen, 75  
 The wife of Capaneus, and once a queen :



At Thebes he fell, curst be the fatal day !  
And all the rest thou seest in this array,  
To make their moan their lords in battle lost  
Before that town, besieg'd by our confederate host ; 80  
But Creon, old and impious, who commands  
The Theban city, and usurps the lands,  
Denies the rites of funeral fires to those  
Whose breathless bodies yet he calls his foes.  
Unburn'd, unbury'd, on a heap they lie ; 85  
Such is their fate, and such his tyranny ;  
No friend has leave to bear away the dead,  
But with their lifeless limbs his hounds are fed :  
At this she shriek'd aloud ; the mournful train  
Echo'd her grief, and, groveling on the plain, 90  
With groans, and hands upheld, to move his mind,  
Besought his pity to their helpless kind !

The prince was touch'd, his tears began to flow,  
And, as his tender heart would break in two,  
He sigh'd ; and could not but their fate deplore, 95  
So wretched now, so fortunate before.  
Then lightly from his lofty steed he flew,  
And raising one by one the suppliant crew,  
To comfort each, full solemnly he swore,  
That by the faith which knights to knighthood bore,  
And whate'er else to chivalry belongs, 100  
He would not cease, till he reveng'd their wrongs ;  
That Greece should see perform'd what he declar'd ;  
And cruel Creon find his just reward.  
He said no more, but, shunning all delay, 105  
Rode on ; nor enter'd Athens on his way ;  
But left his sister and his queen behind,  
And wav'd his royal banner in the wind :  
Where in an argent field the god of war  
Was drawn triumphant on his iron car ; 110  
Red was his sword and shield, and whole attire,  
And all the godhead seem'd to glow with fire ;  
Ev'n the ground glitter'd where the standard flew,  
And the green grass was dy'd to sanguine hue,  
High on his pointed lance his pennon bore 115  
His Cretan fight the conquer'd Minotaure :



The soldiers shout around with generous rage,  
And in that victory their own presage.

He prais'd their ardour; inly pleas'd to see

His host the flower of Grecian chivalry.

120

All day he march'd, and all th' ensuing night;

And saw the city with returning light.

The process of the war I need not tell,

How Theseus conquer'd, and how Creon fell:

Or after, how by storm the walls were won,

125

Or how the victor sack'd and burn'd the town:

How to the ladies he restor'd again

The bodies of their lords in battle slain:

And with what ancient rites they were interr'd;

All these to fitter times shall be deferr'd;

130

I spare the widow's tears, their woeful cries,

And howling at their husband's obsequies;

How Theseus at these funerals did assist,

And with what gifts the mourning dames dismiss'd.

Thus when the victor chief had Creon slain,

135

And conquer'd Thebes, he pitch'd upon the plain

His mighty camp, and, when the day return'd,

The country wasted, and the hamlets burn'd,

And left the pillagers, to rapine bred,

Without control to strip and spoil the dead.

140

There, in a heap of slain, among the rest [press'd

Two youthful knights they found beneath a load op-

Of slaughter'd foes, whom first to death they sent,

The trophies of their strength, a bloody monument.

Both fair, and both of royal blood they seem'd,

145

Whom kinsmen to the crown the heralds deem'd;

That day in equal arms they fought for fame;

Their swords, their shields, their surcoats were the same.

Close by each other laid, they press'd the ground,

Their manly bosoms pierc'd with many a grisly wound;

Nor well alive, nor wholly dead they were,

151

But some faint signs of feeble life appear:

The wandering breath was on the wing to part,

Weak was the pulse, and hardly heav'd the heart.

These two were sisters' sons; and Arcite one,

155

Much fam'd in fields, with valiant Palamon.









At every turn she made a little stand,  
And thrust among the thorns her lily hand,  
To draw the rose and every rose she drew,  
She shook the stalk and brushed away the dew.  
*Vide Dryden Palamon & Arcite Vol. III. Book 1. Page 81. Line 191.*

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From these their costly arms the spoilers rent,  
 And softly both convey'd to Theseus' tent :  
 Whom known of Creon's line, and cur'd with care,  
 He to his city sent as prisoners of the war, 160  
 Hopeless of ransom and condemn'd to lie  
 In durance, doom'd a lingering death to die.  
 This done, he march'd away with warlike sound,  
 And to his Athens turn'd with laurels crown'd,  
 Where happy long he liv'd, much lov'd, and more re-  
 But in a tower, and never to be loos'd, [nown'd.  
 The woeful captive kinsmen are inclos'd : 167

Thus year by year they pass, and day by day,  
 Till once, 'twas on the morn of cheerful May,  
 The young Emilia, fairer to be seen 170  
 Than the fair lily on the flowery green,  
 More fresh than May herself in blossoms new,  
 For with the rosy colour strove her hue,  
 Wak'd, as her custom was, before the day,  
 To do th' observance due to sprightly May : 175  
 For sprightly May commands our youth to keep  
 The vigils of her night, and breaks their sluggard sleep ;  
 Each gentle breast with kindly warmth she moves ;  
 Inspires new flames, revives extinguish'd loves,  
 In this remembrance Emily ere day 180  
 Arose, and dress'd herself in rich array ;  
 Fresh as the month, and as the morning fair ;  
 Adown her shoulders fell her length of hair :  
 A ribband did the braided tresses bind,  
 The rest was loose and wanton'd in the wind : 185  
 Aurora had but newly chas'd the night,  
 And purpled o'er the sky with blushing light,  
 When to the garden walk she took her way,  
 To sport and trip along in cool of day,  
 And offer maiden vows in honour of the May. 190

At every turn she made a little stand,  
 And thrust among the thorns her lily hand  
 To draw the rose, and every rose she drew  
 She shook the stalk, and brush'd away the dew :  
 Then party-coloured flowers of white and red 195  
 She wove, to make a garland for her head :



This done, she sung and caroll'd out so clear,  
 That men and angels might rejoice to hear :  
 E'en wondering Philomel forgot to sing ;  
 And learn'd from her to welcome in the spring. 200  
 The tower, of which before was mention made,  
 Within whose keep the captive knights were laid,  
 Built of a large extent, and strong withal,  
 Was one partition of the palace wall :

The garden was inclos'd within the square, 205  
 Where young Emilia took the morning air.

It happen'd Palamon the prisoner knight,  
 Restless for woe, arose before the light,  
 And with his jailor's leave desired to breathe  
 An air more wholesome than the damps beneath. 210

This granted, to the tower he took his way,  
 Cheer'd with the promise of a glorious day :  
 Then cast a languishing regard around,  
 And saw with hateful eyes the temples crown'd  
 With golden spires, and all the hostile ground. 215

He sigh'd, and turn'd his eyes, because he knew  
 'Twas but a larger goal he had in view :

Then look'd below, and from the castle's height  
 Beheld a nearer and more pleasing sight :  
 The garden, which before he had not seen, 220

In spring's new livery clad of white and green,  
 Fresh flowers in wide parterres, and shady walks between.

This view'd, but not enjoy'd, with arms across  
 He stood, reflecting on his country's loss ;  
 Himself an object of the public scorn, 225

And often wish'd he never had been born.

At last, for so his destiny requir'd,  
 With walking giddy, and with thinking tir'd,  
 He through a little window cast his sight,  
 Though thick of bars that gave a scanty light : 230

But ev'n that glimmering serv'd him to descry  
 Th' inevitable charms of Emily.

Scarce had he seen, but, seiz'd with sudden smart,  
 Stung to the quick, he felt it at his heart ;  
 Struck blind with over-powering light he stood, 235  
 Then started back amaz'd, and cry'd aloud.



Young Arcite heard; and up he ran with haste,  
To help his friend, and in his arms embrac'd;  
And ask'd him why he look'd so deadly wan,  
And whence and how his change of cheer began? 240  
Or who had done the offence? But if, said he,  
Your grief alone is hard captivity;  
For love of heav'n, with patience undergo  
A cureless ill, since fate will have it so:  
So stood our horoscope in chain's to lie, 245  
And Saturn in the dungeon of the sky,  
Or other baleful aspect, rul'd our birth,  
When all the friendly stars were under earth:  
What'er betides, by destiny 'tis done;  
And better bear like men, than vainly seek to shun. 250  
Nor of my bonds, said Palamon again,  
Nor of unhappy planets I complain;  
But when my mortal anguish caus'd my cry,  
That moment I was hurt through either eye;  
Pierc'd with a random shaft, I fainted away, 255  
And perish with insensible decay:  
A glance of some new goddess gave the wound,  
Whom, like Acteon, unaware I found.  
Look how she walks along yon shady space,  
Not Juno moves with more majestic grace; 260  
And all the Cyprian queen is in her face.  
If thou art Venus (for thy charms confess  
That face was form'd in heaven, nor art thou less;  
Disguis'd in habit, undisguis'd in shape)  
O help us captives from our chains to 'scape; 265  
But if our doom be past in bonds to lie  
For life, and in a loathsome dungeon die,  
Then be thy wrath appeas'd with our disgrace,  
And shew compassion to the Theban race,  
Oppress'd by tyrant power! While yet he spoke 270  
Arcite on Emily had fix'd his look;  
The fatal dart a ready passage found,  
And deep within his heart infix'd the wound:  
So that if Palamon were wounded fore,  
Arcite was hurt as much as he, or more: 275



Then from his inmost soul he sigh'd, and said,  
 The beauty I behold has struck me dead :  
 Unknowingly she strikes; and kills by chance;  
 Poison is in her eyes, and death in every glance.  
 O, I must ask ; nor ask alone, but move  
 Her mind to mercy, or must die for love.

280

Thus Arcite : and thus Palamon replies,  
 (Eager his tone, and ardent were his eyes.)  
 Speak'st thou in earnest, or in jesting vein ?  
 Jestings, said Arcite, suits but ill with pain. 285  
 It suits far worse (said Palamon again,  
 And bent his brows) with men who honour weigh,  
 Their faith to break, their friendship to betray ;  
 But worst with thee, of noble lineage born,  
 My kinsman, and in arms my brother sworn. 290  
 Have we not plighted each our holy oath,  
 That one should be the common good of both ;  
 One soul should both inspire, and neither prove  
 His fellow's hindrance in pursuit of love ?  
 To this before the gods we gave our hands, 295  
 And nothing but our death can break the bands.  
 This binds thee, then, to further my design ;  
 As I am bound by vows to further thine :  
 Nor canst, nor darst thou, traitor, on the plain  
 Appeach my honour, or thine own maintain, 300  
 Since thou art of my council, and the friend  
 Whose faith I trust, and on whose care depend :  
 And would'st thou court my lady's love, which I  
 Much rather than release would choose to die ?  
 But thou, false Arcite, never shalt obtain 305  
 Thy bad pretence ; I told thee first my pain :  
 For first my love began, ere thine was born ;  
 Thou, as my council, and my brother sworn,  
 Art bound t' assist my eldership of right :  
 Or justly to be deem'd a perjur'd knight. 310

Thus Palamon : but Arcite with disdain  
 In haughty language thus reply'd again ;  
 Forsworn thyself : the traitor's odious name  
 I first return, and then disprove thy claim.



If love be passion, and that passion nurst  
With strong desires, I lov'd the lady first. 315

Canst thou pretend desire, whom zeal inflam'd  
To worship, and a power celestial nam'd?

Thine was devotion to the blest above,  
I saw the woman, and desir'd her love; 320

First own'd my passion, and to thee commend  
Th' important secret, as my chosen friend.

Suppose (which yet I grant not) thy desire  
A moment elder than my rival fire;

Can chance of seeing first thy title prove? 325  
And know'st thou not, no law is made for love?

Law is to things which to free choice relate;  
Love is not in our choice, but in our fate;

Laws are but positive: love's power, we see,  
Is Nature's sanction, and her first decree. 330

Each day we break the bond of human laws  
For love, and vindicate the common cause.

Laws for defence of civil rights are plac'd,  
Love throws the fences down, and makes a general  
waste:

Maids, widows, wives, without distinction fall; 335  
The sweeping deluge, love, comes on, and covers all.

If then the laws of friendship I transgress,  
I keep the greater, while I break the less;  
And both are mad alike, since neither can possess.

Both hopeless to be ransom'd, never more 340  
To see the sun, but as he passes o'er.

Like *Æsop's* hounds contending for the bone,  
Each pleaded right, and would be lord alone:  
The fruitless fight continued all the day;  
A cur came by, and snatch'd the prize away. 345

As courtiers, therefore, jostle for a grant,  
And when they break their friendship plead their want,  
So thou, if fortune will thy suit advance,  
Love on, nor envy me my equal chance:

For I must love, and am resolv'd to try. 350  
My fate, or failing in th' adventure die.

Great was their strife, which hourly was renew'd,  
Till each with mortal hate his rival view'd:



Now friends no more; nor walking hand in hand;  
 But when they met, they made a surly stand; 355  
 And glar'd like angry lions as they pass'd,  
 And wish'd that every look might be their last.

It chanc'd at length, Pirithous came t'attend  
 This worthy Theseus, his familiar friend;  
 Their love in early infancy began, 360  
 And rose as childhood ripen'd into man.  
 Companions of the war; and lov'd so well,  
 That when one dy'd, as ancient stories tell,  
 His fellow to redeem him went to hell.

But to pursue my tale; to welcome home 365  
 His warlike brother is Pirithous come:  
 Arcite, of Thebes, was known in arms long since,  
 And honour'd by this young Thessalian prince.  
 Theseus, to gratify his friend and guest,  
 Who made our Arcite's freedom his request, 370  
 Restor'd to liberty the captive knight,  
 But on these hard conditions I recite:  
 That if hereafter Arcite should be found,  
 Within the compass of Athenian ground,  
 By day or night, or on whate'er pretence, 375  
 His head should pay the forfeit of th' offence.  
 To this Pirithous for his friend agreed,  
 And on his promise was the prisoner freed.

Unpleas'd and pensive hence he takes his way,  
 At his own peril; for his life must pay. 380  
 Who now but Arcite mourns his bitter fate,  
 Finds his dear purchase, and repents too late?  
 What have I gain'd, he said, in prison pent,  
 If I but change my bonds for banishment?  
 And banish'd from her sight, I suffer more 385  
 In freedom, than I felt in bonds before:  
 Forc'd from her presence, and condemn'd to live:  
 Unwelcome freedom, and unthank'd reprieve:  
 Heaven is not, but where Emily abides;  
 And where she's absent, all is hell besides. 390  
 Next to my day of birth, was that accurst,  
 Which bound my friendship to Pirithous first:



Had I not known that prince, I still had been  
In bondage, and had still Emilia seen :

For though I never can her grace deserve, 395  
'Tis recompence enough to see and serve.

O Palamon, my kindſman and my friend,  
How much more happy fates thy love attend !

Thine is th' adventure ; thine the victory :  
Well has thy fortune turn'd the dice for thee : 400

Thou on that angel's face may'ſt feed thine eyes,  
In priſon, no : but bliſſful paradise !

Thou daily ſeeſt that ſun of beauty ſhine,  
And lov'ſt at leaſt in love's extremeſt line.

I mourn in abſence, love's eternal night ; 405  
And who can tell but ſince thou haſt her ſight,

And art a comely, young, and valiant knight,  
Fortune (a various power) may ceaſe to frown,  
And by ſome ways unknown thy wiſhes crown ?

But I, the moſt forlorn of human kind, 410  
Nor help can hope, nor remedy can find ;

But, doom'd to drag my loathſome life in care,  
For my reward, muſt end it in deſpair.

Fire, water, air, and earth, and force of fates  
That governs all, and heaven that all creates, 415

Nor art, nor nature's hand can eaſe my grief ;  
Nothing but death, the wretch's laſt relief :

Then farewel youth, and all the joys that dwell  
With youth and life, and life itſelf farewel.

But why, alas ! do mortal men in vain 420  
Of fortune, fate, or Providence complain ?

God gives us what he knows our wants require,  
And better things than thoſe which we deſire :

Some pray for riches, riches they obtain ;  
But watch'd by robbers, for their wealth are ſlain ; 425

Some pray from priſon, to be free'd : and come,  
When guilty of their vows, to fall at home ;

Murder'd by thoſe they truſted with their life,  
A favour'd ſervant, or a boſom wife.

Such dear-bought bleſſings happen every day, 430  
Be cauſe we know not for what things to pray.



Like drunken sots about the street we roam :  
Well knows the sot he has a certain home ;  
Yet knows not how to find th' uncertain place,  
And blunders on, and staggers ev'ry pace. 435  
Thus all seek happiness ; but few can find ;  
For far the greater part of men are blind.  
This is my case, who thought our utmost good  
Was in one word of freedom understood :  
The fatal blessing came : from prison free, 440  
I starve abroad, and lose the sight of Emily.

Thus Arcite : but if Arcite thus deplore  
His sufferings, Palamon yet suffers more.  
For when he knew his rival freed and gone, 444  
He swells with wrath ; he makes outrageous moan :  
He frets, he fumes, he stares, he stamps the ground !  
The hollow tower with clamours rings around :  
With briny tears he bath'd his fetter'd feet,  
And dropt all o'er with agony of sweat.  
Alas ! he cry'd ! I, wretch in prison, pine, 450  
Too happy rival, while the fruit is thine :  
Thou liv'st at large, thou draw'st thy native air,  
Pleas'd with thy freedom, proud of my despair :  
Thou may'st, since thou hast youth and courage join'd,  
A sweet behaviour and a solid mind, 455  
Assemble ours, and all the Theban race,  
To vindicate on Athens thy disgrace ;  
And after, by some treaty made, possess  
Fair Emily, the pledge of lasting peace.  
So thine shall be the beauteous prize, while I 460  
Must languish in despair, in prison die.  
Thus all the advantage of the strife is thine ;  
Thy portion double joys, and double sorrows mine.

The rage of Jealousy then fir'd his soul,  
And his face kindled like a burning coal : 465  
Now cold Despair, succeeding in her stead,  
To livid paleness turns the glowing red.  
His blood, scarce liquid, creeps within his veins,  
Like water which the freezing wind constrains.  
Then thus he said : Eternal Deities, 470  
Who rule the world with absolute decrees,



And write whatever time shall bring to pass,  
 With pens of adamant, on plates of brass;  
 What, is the race of human kind your care  
 Beyond what all his fellow-creatures are? 475  
 He with the rest is liable to pain,  
 And like the sheep, his brother-beast, is slain.  
 Cold, hunger, prisons, ills without a cure,  
 All these he must, and guiltless, oft endure;  
 Or does your justice, power, or prescience fail, 480  
 When the good suffer, and the bad prevail?  
 What worse to wretched virtue could befall,  
 If fate or giddy fortune govern'd all?  
 Nay, worse than other beasts is our estate;  
 Them, to pursue their pleasures, you create; 485  
 We, bound by harder laws, must curb our will,  
 And your commands, not our desires, fulfil;  
 Then when the creature is unjustly slain,  
 Yet after death at least he feels no pain;  
 But man in life furcharg'd with woe before, 490  
 Not freed when dead, is doom'd to suffer more.  
 A serpent shoots his sting at unaware;  
 An ambush'd thief forelays a traveller:  
 The man lies murder'd while the thief and snake,  
 One gains the thickets, and one thrids the brake. 495  
 This let divines decide; but well I know,  
 Just or unjust, I have my share of woe,  
 Through Saturn seated on a luckless place,  
 And Juno's wrath that persecutes my race;  
 Or Mars and Venus, in a quartil, move 500  
 My pangs of jealousy for Arcite's love.

Let Palamon oppress'd in bondage mourn,  
 While to his exil'd rival we return.  
 By this the sun, declining from his height,  
 The day had shorten'd to prolong the night: 505  
 The lengthen'd night gave length of misery  
 Both to the captive lover and the free;  
 For Palamon in endless prison mourns,  
 And Arcite forfeits life if he returns:  
 The banish'd never hopes his love to see, 510  
 Nor hopes the captive lord his liberty:



'Tis hard to say who suffers greater pains :  
 One sees his love, but cannot break his chains :  
 One free, and all his motions uncontroll'd,  
 Beholds whate'er he would, but what he would be-  
 hold.

515

Judge as you please ; for I will haste to tell  
 What fortune to the banish'd knight befel.  
 When Arcite was to Thebes return'd again,  
 The loss of her he lov'd renew'd his pain ;  
 What could be worse, than never more to see  
 His life, his soul, his charming Emily ?  
 He rav'd with all the madness of despair,  
 He roar'd, he beat his breast, he tore his hair.

520

Dry sorrow in his stupid eyes appears,  
 For, wanting nourishment, he wanted tears :  
 His eye-balls in their hollow sockets sink,  
 Bereft of sleep, he loaths his meat and drink.

525

He withers at his heart, and looks as wan  
 As the pale spectre of a murder'd man :  
 That pale turns yellow, and his face receives  
 The faded hue of sapless boxen leaves :  
 In solitary groves he makes his moan,  
 Walks early out, and ever is alone :

530

Nor, mixt in mirth, in youthful pleasures shares,  
 But sighs when songs and instruments he hears.

535

His spirits are so low, his voice is drown'd,  
 He hears as from afar, or in a swoon,  
 Like the deaf murmurs of a distant sound :  
 Uncomb'd his locks, and squalid his attire,  
 Unlike the trim of love and gay desire :

540

But full of museful mopings, which presage  
 The loss of reason, and conclude in rage.

This when he had endur'd a year and more,  
 Now wholly chang'd from what he was before,  
 It happen'd once, that, slumbering as he lay,

545

He dream'd (his dream began at break of day)

That Hermes o'er his head in air appear'd,  
 And with soft words his drooping spirits cheer'd :  
 His hat, adorn'd with wings, disclos'd the God,  
 And in his hand he bore the sleep-compelling rod :

550



Such as he seem'd, when at his fire's command,  
On Argus' head he laid the snaky wand.  
Arise, he said, to conquering Athens go,  
There fate appoints an end to all my woe.  
The fright awaken'd Arcite with a start, 555  
Against his bosom bounc'd his heaving heart;  
But soon he said, with scarce-recover'd breath,  
And thither will I go, to meet my death,  
Sure to be slain; but death is my desire,  
Since in Emelia's fight I shall expire. 560  
By chance he spy'd a mirror while he spokè,  
And gazing there beheld his alter'd look;  
Wondering, he saw his features and his hue  
So much were chang'd, that scarce himself he knew.  
A sudden thought then starting in his mind 565  
Since I in Arcite cannot Arcite find,  
The world may search in vain with all their eyes,  
But never penetrate through this disguise.  
Thanks to the change which grief and sickness give,  
In low estate I may securely live, 570  
And see unknown my mistress day by day.  
He said, and cloath'd himself in coarse array:  
A labouring hind in shew; then forth he went:  
And to th' Athenian towers his journey bent:  
One squire attended in the same disguise, 575  
Made conscious of his master's enterprise.  
Arriv'd at Athens, soon he came to court,  
Unknown, unquestion'd in that thick resort;  
Proffering for hire his service at the gate,  
To drudge, draw water, and to run or wait. 580  
So fair befel him, that for little gain  
He serv'd at first Emelia's chamberlain;  
And, watchful all advantages to spy,  
Was still at hand, and in his master's eye;  
And as his bones were big, and sinews strong, 585  
Refus'd no toil that could to slaves belong?  
But from deep wells with engines water drew,  
And us'd his noble hands the wood to hew.  
He pass'd a year at least attending thus  
On Emily, and call'd Philostratus. 590



But never was there man of his degree  
So much esteem'd, so well belov'd as he.  
So gentle of condition was he known,  
That through the court his courtesy was blown ;  
All think him worthy of a greater place, 595  
And recommend him to the royal grace :  
That, exercis'd within a higher sphere,  
His virtues more conspicuous might appear.  
Thus by the general voice was Arcite prais'd,  
And by great Theseus to high favour rais'd : 600  
Among his menial servants first enroll'd,  
And largely entertain'd with sums of gold :  
Besides what secretly from Thebes was sent,  
Of his own income, and his annual rent :  
This well employ'd, he purchas'd friends and fame,  
But cautiously conceal'd from whence it came. 606  
Thus for three years he liv'd with large increase,  
In arms of honour, and esteem in peace ;  
To Theseus' person he was ever near ;  
And Theseus for his virtues held him dear. 610





## BOOK II.

**W**HILE Arcite lives in blifs, the ftory turns  
Where hopelefs Palamon in prifon mourns.  
For fix long years immur'd, the captive knight  
Had dragg'd his chains, and fcarcely feen the light :  
Loft liberty, and love, at once he bore : 5  
His prifon pain'd him much, his paffion more :  
Nor dares he hope his fetters to remove,  
Nor ever wifhes to be free from love.

But when the fixth revolving year was run,  
And May within the Twins receiv'd the fun, 10  
Were it by chance, or forceful destiny,  
Which forms in caufes firft whate'er fhall be,  
Affifted by a friend, one moonlefs night,  
This Palamon from prifon took his flight :  
A pleafant beverage he prepar'd before 15  
Of wine and honey mix'd with added ftore  
Of opium ; to his keeper this he brought,  
Who fwallow'd unaware the fleepy draught,  
And fnor'd fecure till morn, his fenses bound  
In flumber, and in long oblivion drown'd. 20  
Short was the night, and careful Palamon  
Sought the next covert e'er the rifing fun.  
A thick fpread foreft near the city lay,  
To this with lengthen'd ftrides he took his way  
(For far he could not fly, and fear'd the day.) 25  
Safe from purfuit, he meant to fhun the light,  
Till the brown shadows of the friendly night  
To Thebes might favour his intended flight.  
When to his country come, his next design  
Was all the Theban race in arms to join, 30  
And war on Thefeus, till he loft his life,  
Or won the beauteous Emily to wife.  
Thus while his thoughts the lingering day beguile,  
To gentle Arcite let us turn our ftyle ;  
Who little dreamt how nigh he was to care, 35  
Till treacherous fortune caught him in the fnare.  
The morning-lark, the meffenger of day,  
Saluted in her fong the morning grey ;



And soon the sun arose with beams so bright,  
That all th' horizon laugh'd to see the joyous fight :  
He with his tepid rays the rose renews, 41  
And licks the drooping leaves, and dries the dew,  
When Arcite left his bed, resolv'd to pay  
Observance to the month of merry May :  
Forth in his fiery steed betimes he rode, 45  
That scarcely prints the turf on which he trode :  
At ease he seem'd, and, prancing o'er the plains,  
Turn'd only to the grove his horse's reins,  
The grove I nam'd before ; and, lighted there,  
A woodbine garland sought to crown his hair ; 50  
Then turn'd his face against the rising day,  
And rais'd his voice to welcome in the May.  
For thee, sweet month, the groves green liveries wear ;  
If not the first, the fairest of the year :  
For thee the Graces lead the dancing Hours, 55  
And Nature's ready pencil paints the flowers :  
When thy short reign is past, the feverish sun  
The sultry tropic fears, and moves more slowly on.  
So may thy tender blossoms fear no blight,  
Nor goats with venom'd teeth thy tendrils bite, 60  
As thou shalt guide my wandering feet to find  
The fragrant greens I seek my brows to bind.  
His vows address'd, within the grove he stray'd,  
Till fate, or fortune, near the place convey'd  
His steps where secret Palamon was laid. 65  
Full little thought of him the gentle knight  
Who, flying death, had there conceal'd his flight,  
In breaks and brambles hid, and shuning mortal fight :  
And less he knew him for his hated foe,  
But fear'd him as a man he did not know. 70  
But as it has been said of ancient years,  
That fields are full of eyes, and woods have ears ;  
For this the wise are ever on their guard,  
For, unforeseen, they say, is unprepar'd.  
Uncautious Arcite thought himself alone, 75  
And less than all suspected Palamon,  
Who listening heard him, while he search'd the groves,  
And loudly sung his roundelay of love :



But on the sudden stopp'd, and silent stood,  
 As lovers often muse, and change their mood ; 80  
 Now high as heaven, and then as low as hell ;  
 Now up, now down, as buckets in a well :  
 For Venus, like her day, will change her cheer,  
 And seldom shall we see a Friday clear.

Thus Arcite, having sung, with alter'd hue 85  
 Sunk on the ground, and from his bosom drew  
 A desperate sigh, accusing Heaven and Fate,  
 And angry Juno's unrelenting hate.

Curs'd be the day when first I did appear ;  
 Let it be blotted from the kalendar. 90

Let it pollute the month, and poison all the year.

Still will the jealous Queen pursue our race ;

Cadmus is dead, the Theban city was :

Yet ceases not her hate ; for all who come

From Cadmus are involv'd in Cadmus' doom. 95

I suffer for my blood : unjust decree !

That punishes another's crime in me.

In mean estate I serve my mortal foe,

The man who caus'd my country's overthrow.

This is not all ; for Juno, to my shame, 100

Has forc'd me to forsake my former name :

Arcite I was, Philostratus I am,

That side of heaven is all my enemy :

Mars ruin'd Thebes : his mother ruin'd me.

Of all the royal race remains but one 105

Besides myself, th' unhappy Palamon,

Whom Theseus holds in bonds, and will not free ;

Without a crime, except his kin to me.

Yet these, and all the rest, I could endure ;

But Love's a malady without a cure ? 110

Fierce Love has pierc'd me with his fiery dart,

He fires within, and hisses at my heart.

Your eyes, fair Emily, my fate pursue ;

I suffer for the rest, I die for you.

Of such a Goddess no time leaves record, 115

Who burn'd the temple where she was ador'd :

And let it burn, I never will complain,

Pleas'd with my sufferings, if you knew my pain.



At this a sickly qualm his heart assail'd,  
 His ears rung inward, and his senses fail'd. 120  
 No word miss'd Palamon of all he spoke,  
 But soon to deadly pale he chang'd his look :  
 He trembled every limb, and felt a smart,  
 As if cold steel had glided through his heart ;  
 No longer staid, but starting from his place, 125  
 Discover'd stood, and shew'd his hostile face :  
 False traitor Arcite, traitor to thy blood,  
 Bound by thy sacred oath to seek my good :  
 Now art thou found foresworn, for Emily ;  
 And dar'st attempt her love, for whom I die. 130  
 So hast thou cheated Theseus with a wile,  
 Against thy vow, returning to beguile,  
 Under a borrow'd name, as false to me,  
 So false thou art to him who set thee free :  
 But rest assur'd, that either thou shalt die, 135  
 Or else renounce thy claim in Emily :  
 For, though unarm'd I am, (and free'd by chance)  
 And here without my sword, or pointed lance :  
 Hope not, base man, unquestiō'd hence to go,  
 For I am Palamon, thy mortal foe. 140

Arcite, who heard his tale, and knew the man,  
 His sword unsheath'd, and fiercely thus began :  
 Now by the Gods who govern heaven above,  
 Wert thou not weak with hunger, mad with love,  
 That word had been thy last, or in this grove 145  
 This hand should force thee to renounce thy love.  
 The surety which I gave thee, I defy :  
 Fool, not to know that love endures no tie,  
 And Jove but laughs at lovers perjury.  
 Know I will serve the fair in thy despight ; 150  
 But since thou art my kinsman, and a knight,  
 Here, have my faith, to-morrow in this grove  
 Our arms shall plead the titles of our love :  
 And Heaven to help my right, as I alone  
 Will come, and keep the cause and quarrel both un-  
 known : 155  
 With arms of proof both for myself and thee ;  
 Choose thou the best, and leave the worst to me.



And, that at better ease thou may'st abide,  
Bedding and clothes I will this night provide,  
And needful sustenance, that thou may'st be 160  
A conquest better won, and worthy me.  
His promise Palamon accepts ; but pray'd,  
To keep it better than the first he made.  
Thus fair they parted till the morrow's dawn,  
For each had laid his plighted faith to pawn. 165  
Oh Love ! thou sternly dost thy power maintain,  
And wilt not bear a rival in thy reign,  
Tyrants and thou all fellowship disdain.  
This was in Arcite prov'd, and Palamon ;  
Both in despair, yet each would love alone. 170  
Arcite return'd, and, as in honour ty'd,  
His foe with bedding and with food supply'd ;  
Then, ere the day, two suits of armour sought,  
Which borne before him on his steed he brought :  
Both were of shining steel, and wrought so pure, 175  
As might the strokes of two such arms endure.  
Now, at the time, and in th' appointed place,  
The challenger and challeng'd, face to face,  
Approach ; each other from afar they knew,  
And from afar their hatred chang'd their hue. 180  
So stands the Thracian herdsman with his spear,  
Full in the gap, and hopes the hunted bear,  
And hears him rustling in the wood, and sees  
His course at distance by the bending trees ;  
And thinks, here comes my mortal enemy, 185  
And either he must fall in fight, or I :  
This while he thinks, he lifts aloft his dart ;  
A generous chilness seizes every part :  
The veins pour back the blood and fortify the heart.  
Thus pale they meet ; their eyes with fury burn ; 190  
None greets ; for none the greeting will return:  
But in dim furliness, each arm'd with care  
His foe profess, as brother of the war :  
Then both, no moment lost, at once advance  
Against each other, arm'd with sword and lance : 195  
They lash, they foin, they pass, they strive to bore  
Their corselets, and the thinnest parts explore.



Thus two long hours in equal arms they stood,  
 And wounded, wound ; till both were bath'd in blood ;  
 And not a foot of ground had either got, 200  
 As if the world depended on the spot.  
 Fell Arcite like an angry tiger far'd,  
 And like a lion Palamon appear'd :  
 Or as two boars whom love to battle draws,  
 With rising bristles, and with frothy jaws, 205  
 Their adverse breasts with tusks oblique they wound ;  
 With grunts and groans the forest rings around.  
 So fought the knights, and fighting must abide,  
 Till Fate an umpire sends their difference to decide.  
 The power that ministers to God's decrees, 210  
 And executes on earth what heaven foresees,  
 Call'd Providence, or Chance, or Fatal Sway,  
 Comes with resistless force, and finds or makes her way.  
 Nor kings, nor nations, nor united power,  
 One moment can retard th' appointed hour. 215  
 And some one day, some wondrous chance appears,  
 Which happen'd not in centuries of years :  
 For sure, whate'er we mortals hate, or love,  
 Or hope, or fear, depends on powers above ;  
 They move our appetites to good or ill, 220  
 And by foresight necessitate the will.  
 In Theseus this appears ; whose youthful joy  
 Was beasts of chase in forests to destroy,  
 This gentle knight, inspir'd by jolly May,  
 Forsook his easy couch at early day, 225  
 And to the wood and wilds pursued his way.  
 Beside him rode Hippolita the queen,  
 And Emily attir'd in lively green,  
 With horns, and hounds, and all the tuneful cry,  
 To hunt a royal hart within the covert nigh : 230  
 And as he follow'd Mars before, so now  
 He serves the goddess of the silver bow.  
 The way that Theseus took was to the wood,  
 Where the two knights in cruel battle stood :  
 The lawn on which they fought, th' appointed place  
 In which th' uncoupled hounds began the chase. 236



Thither forth-right he rode to rouse the prey,  
 That, shaded by the fern in harbour lay :  
 And, thence dislodg'd was wont to leave the wood,  
 For open fields, and cross the crystal flood. 240  
 Approach'd, and looking underneath the sun,  
 He saw proud Arcite, and fierce Palamon,  
 In mortal battle doubling blow on blow,  
 Like lighting flam'd their faulchions to and fro,  
 And shot a dreadful gleam ; so strong they strook, 245  
 There seem'd less force requir'd to fell an oak :  
 He gaz'd with wonder on their equal might,  
 Look'd eager on, but knew not either knight :  
 Resolv'd to learn, he spurr'd his fiery steed  
 With goring rowels, to provoke his speed. 250  
 The minute ended that began the race,  
 So soon he was betwixt them on the place ;  
 And with his sword unsheath'd, on pain of life  
 Commands both combatants to cease their strife :  
 Then with imperious tone pursues his threat ; 255  
 What are you ? why in arms together met ?  
 How dares your pride presume against my laws,  
 As in a list'd field to fight your cause ?  
 Unmask'd the royal grant ; no marshal by,  
 As knightly to require ; nor judge to try ? 260  
 Then Palamon, with scarce recover'd breath,  
 Thus hasty spoke : We both deserve the death,  
 And both would die ; for look the world around,  
 A pair so wretched is not to be found,  
 Our life's a load ; encumber'd with the charge, 265  
 We long to set th' imprison'd soul at large.  
 Now, as thou art a sovereign judge, decree  
 The rightful doom of death to him and me ;  
 Let neither find thy grace ; for grace is cruelty.  
 Me first, O kill me first, and cure my woe ; 270  
 Then sheath the sword of justice on my foe :  
 Or kill him first ; for when his name is heard,  
 He foremost will receive his due reward.  
 Arcite of Thebes is he ; thy mortal foe :  
 On whom thy grace did liberty bestow ; 275



But first contracted, that if ever found  
By day or night upon th' Athenian ground,  
His head should pay the forfeit ; see return'd  
The perjur'd knight, his oath and honour scorn'd.  
For this is he, who, with a borrow'd name, 280  
And proffer'd service, to thy palace came,  
Now call'd Philostratus : retain'd by thee,  
A traitor trusted, and in high degree,  
Aspiring to the bed of beauteous Emily.  
My part remains ; from Thebes my birth I own, 285  
And call myself th' unhappy Palamon.  
Think me not like that man ; since no disgrace  
Can force me to renounce the honour of my race.  
Know me for what I am : I broke my chain,  
Nor promis'd I thy prisoner to remain ; 290  
The love of liberty with life is given,  
And life itself th' inferior gift of Heaven.  
Thus without crime I fled ; but farther know,  
I with this Arcite am thy mortal foe ;  
Then give me death, since I thy life pursue ; 295  
For safeguard of thyself, death is my due.  
More wouldst thou know ? I love bright Emily,  
And for her sake and in her sight will die :  
But kill my rival too ; for he no less  
Deserves ; and I thy righteous doom will bless, 300  
Assur'd that what I lose, he never shall possess.  
To this reply'd the stern Athenian prince,  
And sourly smil'd, In owning your offence  
You judge yourself ; and I but keep record  
In place of law, while you pronounce the word. 305  
Take your desert, the death you have decreed ;  
I seal your doom, and ratify the deed :  
By Mars, the patron of my arms, you die.  
He said, dumb sorrow seiz'd the standers-by.  
The queen above the rest, by nature good, 310  
(The pattern form'd of perfect womanhood)  
For tender pity wept : when she began,  
Through the bright quire th' infectious virtue ran.  
All dropt their tears, ev'n the contended maid :  
And thus among themselves they softly said : 315



What eyes can suffer this unworthy fight!  
 Two youths of royal blood, renown'd in fight,  
 The mastership of heaven in face and mind,  
 And lovers, far beyond their faithless kind:  
 See their wide streaming wounds; they neither came 320  
 For pride of empire, nor desire of fame:  
 Kings fight for kingdoms, madmen for applause:  
 But love for love alone; that crowns the lover's cause.  
 This thought, which ever bribes the beauteous kind,  
 Such pity wrought in every lady's mind, 325  
 They left their steeds, and prostrate on the place,  
 From the fierce king implor'd th' offenders grace.  
 He paus'd a while, stood silent in his mood  
 (For yet his rage was boiling in his blood;)  
 But soon his tender mind th' impression felt, 430  
 (As softest metals are not slow to melt  
 And pity soonest runs in softest minds:)  
 Then reasons with himself; and first he finds  
 His passion cast a mist before his sense,  
 And either made, or magnify'd th' offence. 335  
 Offence? of what? to whom? who judg'd the cause?  
 The prisoner freed himself by Nature's laws:  
 Born free, he sought his right: the man he freed  
 Was perjur'd, but his love excus'd the deed:  
 Thus pondering, he look'd under with his eyes, 340  
 And saw the women's tears, and heard their cries;  
 Which mov'd compassion more, he shook his head,  
 And softly sighing to himself he said:

Curse on th' unpardoning prince, whom tears can draw  
 To no remorse; who rules by lions' law, 445  
 And deaf to pray'rs, by no submission bow'd,  
 Rends all alike; the penitent, and proud:  
 At this, with look serene, he rais'd his head;  
 Reason resum'd her place, and Passion fled;  
 Then thus aloud he spoke: The pow'r of love, 350  
 In earth, and seas, and air, and heaven above,  
 Rules, unresisted, with an awful nod;  
 By daily miracles declar'd a God:  
 He blinds the wise, gives eye-sight to the blind;  
 And moulds and stamps anew the lover's mind. 355



Behold that Arcite and this Palamon,  
 Freed from my fetters, and in safety gone,  
 What hinder'd either in their native soil  
 At ease to reap the harvest of their toil;  
 But Love, their lord, did otherwise ordain, 360  
 And brought them in their own despite again,  
 To suffer death deserv'd; so well they know,  
 'Tis in my pow'r, and I their deadly foe;  
 The proverb holds, that to be wise and love,  
 Is hardly granted to the Gods above. 365  
 See how the madmen bleed: behold the gains  
 With which their master, Love, rewards their pains;  
 For seven long years, on duty every day,  
 Lo their obedience, and their monarch's pay:  
 Yet, as in duty bound, they serve him on; 370  
 And, ask the tools, they think it wisely done;  
 Nor ease, nor wealth, nor life itself regard,  
 For 'tis their maxim, love is love's reward.  
 This is not all; the fair for whom they strove  
 Nor knew before, nor could suspect their love, 375  
 Nor thought, when she beheld the fight from far,  
 Her beauty was th' occasion of the war.  
 But sure a general doom on man is past,  
 And all are fools and lovers, first or last:  
 This both by others and myself I know, 380  
 For I have serv'd their sov'reign long ago;  
 Oft have been caught within the winding train  
 Of female snares, and felt the lover's pain, [strain.  
 And learn'd how far the God can human hearts con-  
 To this remembrance, and the pray'rs of those 385  
 Who for th' offending warriors interpose,  
 I give their forfeit lives; on this accord,  
 To do me homage as their sov'reign lord;  
 And as my vassals, to their utmost might,  
 Assist my person, and assert my right, 390  
 This freely sworn, the knights their grace obtain'd.  
 Then thus the king his secret thoughts explain'd;  
 If wealth, or honour, or a royal race,  
 Or each, or all, may win a lady's grace,



Then either of your knights may well deserve 395

A princess born ; and such is she you serve :

For Emily is sister to the crown,

And but too well to both her beauty known :

But should you combat till you both were dead,

Two lovers cannot share a single bed : 400

As therefore both are equal in degree,

The lot of both be left to destiny.

Now hear th' award, and happy may it prove

To her, and him who best deserves her love ?

Depart from hence in peace, and free as air, 405

Search the wide world, and where you please repair ;

But on the day when this returning sun

To the same point through every sign has run,

Then each of you his hundred knights shall bring,

In royal lists, to fight before the king ; 410

And then the knight, whom fate or happy chance

Shall with his friends to victory advance,

And grace his arms so far in equal fight,

From out the bars to force his opposite,

Or kill, or make him recreant on the plain, 415

The prize of valour and of love shall gain ;

The vanquish'd party shall their claim release,

And the long jars conclude in lasting peace.

The charge be mine t' adorn the chosen ground,

The theatre of war, for champions so renown'd ; 420

And take the patron's place of either knight,

With eyes impartial to behold the fight ;

And heaven of me so judge as I shall judge aright.

If both are satisfied with this accord,

Swear by the laws of knighthood on my sword. 425

Who now but Palamon exults with joy,

And ravish'd Arcite seems to touch the sky :

The whole assembled troop was pleas'd as well,

Extol th' award, and on their knees they fell 429

To bless the gracious king. The knights with leave

Departing from the place, his last commands receive ;

On Emily with equal ardour look,

And from her eyes their inspiration took.



From thence to Thebes' old walls pursue their way,  
Each to provide his champions for the day. 435

It might be deem'd on our historian's part,  
Or too much negligence, or want of art,  
If he forgot the vast magnificence  
Of royal Theseus, and his large expence.  
He first enclos'd for lists a level ground, 440  
The whole circumference a mile around ;  
The form was circular ; and all without  
A trench was sunk, to moat the place about.  
Within an amphitheatre appear'd,  
Rais'd in degrees ; to sixty paces rear'd : 445  
That when a man was plac'd in one degree,  
Height was allow'd for him above to see.

Eastward was built a gate of marble white ;  
The like adorn'd the western opposite.  
A nobler object than this fabric was, 450  
Rome never saw ; nor of so vast a space :  
For, rich with spoils of many a conquer'd land,  
All arts and artists Theseus could command ;  
Who sold for hire, or wrought for better fame ;  
The master-painters and the carvers came. 455  
So rose within the compass of the year  
An age's work, a glorious theatre.  
Then o'er its eastern gate was rais'd above  
A temple, sacred to the queen of love ;  
An altar stood below : on either hand 460  
A priest with roses crown'd, who held a myrtle wand.

The dome of Mars was on the gate oppos'd,  
And on the north a turret was inclos'd,  
Within the wall of alabaster white,  
And crimson coral for the queen of night, 465  
Who takes in sylvan sports her chaste delight.

Within these oratories might you see  
Rich carvings, portraitures, and imagery :  
Where every figure to the life express'd  
The godhead's power to whom it was address'd. 470  
In Venus' temple on the sides were seen  
The broken slumbers of enamour'd men,



Prayers that e'en spoke, and pity seem'd to call,  
 And issuing sighs that smok'd along the wall.  
 Complaints, and hot desires, the lover's hell,  
 And scalding tears that wore a channel where they fell:  
 And all around were nuptial bonds, the ties 477  
 Of love's assurance, and a train of lies,  
 That, made it lust, conclude in perjuries.  
 Beauty, and Youth, and Wealth, and Luxury, 380  
 And sprightly Hope, and short-enduring Joy;  
 And forceries to raise th' infernal powers,  
 And Sigils fram'd in planetary hours:  
 Expence, and After-thought, and idle Care,  
 And Doubts of motely hue, and dark Despair: 485  
 Suspicions, and fantastical Surmise,  
 And jealousy suffus'd, with jaundice in her eyes,  
 Discolouring all she view'd, in tawny drels'd;  
 Down-look'd, and with a cuckow on her fist.  
 Oppos'd to her, on t'other side advance 490  
 The costly feast, the carol, and the dance,  
 Minstrels and music, poetry, and play,  
 And balls by night, and tournaments by day.  
 All these were painted on the wall, and more;  
 With acts and monuments of times before: 495  
 And others added by prophetic doom,  
 And lovers yet unborn, and loves to come:  
 For there th' Idalian mount, and Citheron,  
 The court of Venus was in colours drawn:  
 Before the palace gate, in careless drefs, 500  
 And loose array, sat portrefs Idleness;  
 There, by the fount, Narcissus pin'd alone;  
 There Samson was, with wiser Solomon,  
 And all the mighty names by love undone.  
 Medea's charms were there, Circean feasts, 505  
 With bowls that turn'd enamour'd youths to beasts,  
 Here might be seen, that beauty, wealth, and wit,  
 And prowess, to the pow'r of love submit:  
 The spreading snare for all mankind is laid;  
 And lovers all betray, and are betray'd. 510  
 The Goddess' self some noble hand had wrought;  
 Smiling she seem'd, and full of pleasing thought:



From ocean as she first began to rise,  
And smooth'd the ruffled seas and clear'd the skies :  
She trod the brine all bare below the breast,  
And the green waves but ill conceal'd the rest ; 515  
A lute she held, and on her head was seen  
A wreath of roses red, and myrtles green ;  
Her turtles fann'd the buxom air above ;  
And, by his mother, stood an infant Love, 520  
With wings unfledg'd ; his eyes were banded o'er ;  
His hands a bow, his back a quiver bore,  
Supply'd with arrows bright and keen, a deathly store.  
But in the dome of mighty Mars the red  
With different figures all the sides were spread ; 525  
This temple, less in form, with equal grace,  
Was imitative of the first in Thrace :  
For that cold region was the lov'd abode,  
And sovereign mansion of the warrior god.  
The landscape was a forest wide and bare ; 530  
Where neither beast, nor human kind repair ;  
The fowl, that scent afar, the borders fly,  
And shun the bitter blast, and wheel about the fly.  
A cake of scurf, lies baking on the ground,  
And prickly stubs, instead of trees, are found, 535  
Or woods with knots and knares deform'd and old :  
Headless the most, and hideous to behold :  
A rattling tempest through the branches went,  
That stripp'd them bare, and one sole way they bent.  
Heaven froze above, severe, the clouds congeal, 540  
And through the crystal vault appear'd the standing  
Such was the face without ; a mountain stood [hail,  
Threatening from high, and overlook'd the wood :  
Beneath the low'ring brow, and on a bent,  
The temple stood of Mars armipotent : 545  
The frame of burnish'd steel, that cast a glare  
From far, and seem'd to thaw the freezing air.  
A strait long entry to the temple led,  
Blind with high walls ; and horror over head :  
Thence issu'd such a blast, and hollow roar, 550  
As threaten'd from the hinge to heave the door ;



In, through that door, a northen light there shone ;  
'Twas all it had, for windows there were none ;  
The gate was adamant ; eternal frame ! [came,  
Which, hew'd by Mars himself, from Indian quarries  
The labour of a god ; and all along 556  
Tough iron plates were clench'd to make it strong.  
A ton about was every pillar there ;  
A polish'd mirror shone not half so clear.  
There saw I how the secret felon wrought 560  
And treason labouring in the traitor's thought :  
And midwife Time the ripen'd plot to murder brought.  
There the red anger dar'd the pallid fear ;  
Next stood Hypocrisy, with holy leer ;  
Soft smiling, and demurely looking down, 565  
But hid the dagger underneath the gown :  
Th' assassinating wife, the household fiend ;  
And far the blackest there, the traitor-friend.  
On t'other side there stood Destruction bare ;  
Unpunish'd Rapine, and a waste of war. 570  
Contest, with sharpen'd knives, in cloisters drawn,  
And all with blood bespread the holy lawn.  
Loud menaces were heard, and foul Disgrace,  
And bawling Infamy, in language base ;  
Till sense was lost in sound, and silence fled the place.  
The slayer of himself yet saw I there, 576  
The gore congeal'd was clotted in his hair :  
With eyes half clos'd, and gaping mouth he lay,  
And grim, as when he breath'd his sullen soul away.  
In midst of all the dome, Misfortune fate, 580  
And gloomy Discontent, and fell Debate,  
And Madness laughing in his ireful mood ;  
And arm'd complaint on theft ; and cries of blood,  
There was the murder'd corpse, in covert laid,  
And violent death in thousand shapes display'd : 585  
The city to the foildier's rage resign'd :  
Successless wars, and poverty behind :  
Ships burnt in fight, or forc'd on rocky shores,  
And the rash hunter strangled by the boars :  
The new-born babe by nurses overlaid, 590  
And the cook caught within the raging fire he made,



All ills of Mars's nature flame and steel :  
 The gasping charioteer, beneath the wheel  
 Of his own car ; the ruin'd house that falls  
 And intercepts her lord betwixt the walls ; 595  
 The whole division that to Mars pertains,  
 All trades of death that deal in steel for gains  
 Were there, the butcher, armourer, and smith,  
 Who forges sharpen'd faulchions, or the scythe.  
 The scarlet conquest on a tower was plac'd, 600  
 With shouts, and soldiers' acclamations grac'd :  
 A pointed sword hung threatening o'er his head,  
 Sustain'd but by a slender twine of thread.  
 There saw I Mars's ides, the capitol,  
 The seer in vain foretelling Cæsar's fall ; 605  
 The last triumvirs, and the wars they move,  
 And Anthony, who lost the world for love.  
 These, and a thousand more, the fane adorn :  
 Their fates were painted e'er the men were born,  
 All copied from the heavens, and ruling force 610  
 Of the red star, in his revolving course.  
 The form of Mars high on a chariot stood,  
 All sheath'd in arms, and gruffly look'd the God :  
 Two geomantic figures were display'd  
 Above his head, a warrior and a maid ; 615  
 One when direct, and one when retrograde.  
 Tir'd with deformities of death, I haste  
 To the third temple of Diana chaste.  
 A sylvan scene with various greens was drawn,  
 Shades on the sides, and on the midst a lawn : 620  
 The silver Cynthia, with her nymphs around,  
 Pursu'd the flying deer, the woods with horns resound :  
 Calisto there stood manifest of shame,  
 And, turn'd a bear, the northern star became :  
 Her son was next, and by peculiar grace 625  
 In the cold circle held the second place :  
 The stag Acteon in the stream had spy'd :  
 The naked huntress, and, for seeing dy'd :  
 His hounds, unknowing of his change, pursue  
 The chase, and their mistaken master slew. 630



Peneian Daphne too was there to see,  
 Apollo's love before, and now his tree :  
 Th' adjoining fane th' assembled Greeks express'd,  
 And hunting of the Caledonian beast.  
 Oenides' valour, and his envy'd prize ; 540  
 The fatal power of Atalanta's eyes ;  
 Diana's vengeance on the victor shewn,  
 The murderess mother, and consuming son ;  
 The Volscian queen extended on the plain ;  
 The treason punish'd, and the traitor slain. 545  
 The rest were various huntings, well design'd,  
 And savage beasts destroy'd, of every kind.  
 The graceful goddess was array'd in green ;  
 About her feet were little beagles seen, 549  
 That watch'd with upward eyes the motions of their  
 Her legs were buskin'd, and the left before, [queen,  
 In act to shoot, a silver bow she bore,  
 And at her back a painted quiver wore.  
 She trod a waxing moon, that soon would wane,  
 And drinking borrow'd light, be fill'd again : 555  
 With downcast eyes, as seeming to survey  
 The dark dominions, her alternate sway.  
 Before her stood a woman in her throes,  
 And call'd Lucina's aid, her burden to disclose.  
 And all the painter drew with such command, 560  
 That Nature snatch'd the pencil from his hand,  
 Asham'd and angry that his art could feign  
 And mend the tortures of a mother's pain.  
 Theseus beheld the fanes of every God,  
 And thought his mighty cost was well bestow'd. 565  
 So princes now their poets should regard ;  
 But few can write, and fewer can reward.  
 The theatre thus rais'd, the lists inclos'd,  
 And all with vast magnificence dispos'd,  
 We leave the monarch pleas'd, and haste to bring  
 The knights to combat, and their arms to sing. 571



## BOOK III.

**T**HE day approach'd when Fortune should decide  
Th' important enterprize, and give the bride ;  
For now, the rivals round the world had fought,  
And each his rival, well appointed, brought.  
The nations, far and near, contend in choice, 5  
And send the flower of war by public voice ;  
That after, or before, were never known  
Such chiefs, as each an army seem'd alone :  
Besides the champions : all of high degree,  
Who knighthood lov'd, and deeds of chivalry, 10  
Throng'd to the lists, and envy'd to behold  
The names of others, not their own, enroll'd.  
Nor seems it strange ; for every noble knight  
Who loves the fair, and is endu'd with might,  
In such a quarrel would be proud to fight. 15  
There breathes not scarce a man on British ground  
(An isle for love and arms of old renown'd)  
But would have sold his life to purchase fame,  
To Palamon or Arcite sent his name ;  
And had the land selected of the best, 20  
Half had come hence, and let the world provide the rest.  
A hundred knights with Palamon there came,  
Approv'd in fight, and men of mighty name ;  
Their arms were several, as their nations were,  
But furnish'd all alike with sword and spear. 25  
Some wore coat armour, imitating scale ;  
And next their skins were stubborn shirts of mail.  
Some wore a breast-plate and a light juppon,  
Their horses cloth'd with rich caparison :  
Some for defence would leathern bucklers use, 30  
Of folded hides ; and other shields of pruce.  
One hung a pole-axe at his saddle-bow,  
And one a heavy mace to shun the foe ;  
One for his legs and knees provided well,  
With jambeux arm'd, and double plates of steel : 35  
This on his helmet wore a lady's glove,  
And that a sleeve embroider'd by his love.



With Palamon above the rest in place,  
Lycurgus came, the furly king of Thrace;  
Black was his beard, and manly was his face; 40  
The balls of his broad eyes roll'd in his head,  
And glar'd betwixt a yellow and a red:  
He look'd a lion with a gloomy stare,  
And o'er his eye-brows hung his matted hair:  
Big-bon'd, and large of limbs with sinews strong, 45  
Broad-shoulder'd, and his arms were round and long.  
Four milk-white bulls (the Thracian use of old)  
Were yok'd to draw his car of burnish'd gold.  
Upright he stood, and bore aloft his shield,  
Conspicuous from afar, and overlook'd the field. 50  
His furcoat was a bear-skin on his back;  
His hair hung long behind, and glossy raven black.  
His ample forehead bore a coronet,  
With sparkling diamonds and with rubies set:  
Ten brace, and more, of greyhounds, snowy-fair 55  
And tall as stags, ran loose, and cours'd around his chair,  
A match for pards in flight, in grappling for the bear:  
With golden muzzles all their mouths were bound,  
And collars of the same their necks surround.  
Thus through the fields Lycurgus took his way; 60  
His hundred knights attend in pomp and proud array.  
To match this monarch, with strong Arcite came  
Emetrius, king of Inde, a mighty name,  
On a bay courser, goodly to behold,  
The trappings of his horse adorn'd with barbarous gold.  
Not Mars bestrode a steed with greater grace; 66  
His furcoat o'er his arms was cloth of Thrace,  
Adorn'd with pearls, all orient, round, and great;  
His saddle was of gold, with emerald set.  
His shoulders large a mantle did attire, 70  
With rubies thick, and sparkling as the fire:  
His amber-colour'd locks in ringlets run,  
With graceful negligence, and shone against the sun.  
His nose was aquiline, his eyes were blue,  
Ruddy his lips, and fresh and fair his hue: 75  
Some sprinkled freckles on his face were seen,  
Whose dusk set off the whiteness of the skin:



His awful presence did the crowd surprize,  
 Nor durst the rash spectator meet his eyes ;  
 Eyes that confess'd him born for kingly sway, 80  
 So fierce, they flash'd intolerable day.

His age in nature's youthful prime appear'd,  
 And just began to bloom his yellow beard.  
 Whene'er he spoke, his voice was heard around.  
 Loud as a trumpet, with a silver sound, 85  
 A laurel wreath'd his temples, fresh and green ;  
 And myrtle sprigs, the marks of love, were mixed  
 between.

Upon his fist he bore, for his delight,  
 An eagle well reclaim'd, and lily white.

His hundred knights attend him to the war, 90  
 All arm'd for battle ; save their heads were bare.  
 Words and devices blaz'd on every shield,  
 And pleasing was the terror of the field.  
 For kings, and dukes, and barons, you might see,  
 Like sparkling stars, though different in degree, 95  
 All for th' increase of arms, and love of chivalry.  
 Before the king tame leopards led the way,  
 And troops of lions innocently play.

So Bacchus through the conquer'd Indies rode,  
 And beasts in gambols frisk'd before the honest god.

In this array the war of either side 101  
 Through Athens pass'd with military pride.  
 At prime, they enter'd on the Sunday morn ; [adorn.  
 Rich tapestry spread the streets, and flowers the posts  
 The town was all a jubilee of feasts ; 105  
 So Theseus will'd, in honour of his guests ;  
 Himself with open arms the king embrac'd,  
 Then all the rest in their degrees were grac'd.  
 No harbinger was needful for a night.

For every house was proud to lodge a knight. 110

I pass the royal treat, nor must relate  
 The gifts bestow'd, nor how the champions fate :  
 Who first, or last, or how the knights address'd  
 Their vows, or who was fairest at the feast ;  
 Whose voice, whose graceful dance did most surprize ;  
 Soft amorous sighs, and silent love of eyes. 116



The rivals call my Muse another way,  
To sing their vigils for th' ensuing day.  
'Twas ebbing darkness, past the noon of night :  
And phospher, on the confines of the light, 120  
Promis'd the sun, e'er day began to spring ;  
The tuneful lark already stretch'd her wing,  
And, flickering on her nest, made short essays to sing.

When wakeful Palamon, preventing day,  
Took, to the royal lists, his early way, 125  
To Venus at her fane, in her own house, to pray.  
There, falling on his knees before her shrine,  
He thus implor'd with prayers her power divine.

Creator Venus, genial power of love,  
The blifs of men below, and Gods above ! 130

Beneath the sliding sun thou runn'st thy race,  
Dost fairest shine, and best become thy place.

For thee the winds their eastern blasts forbear,  
Thy month reveals the spring, and opens all the year.

Thee, Goddess, thee the storms of winter fly, 135

Earth smiles with flowers renewing, laughs the sky,  
And birds to lays of love their tuneful notes apply.

For thee the lion loaths the taste of blood,  
And roaring hunts his female through the wood :

For thee the bulls rebellow through the groves, 140

And tempt the stream, and snuff their absent loves.

'Tis thine, whate'er is pleasant, good, or fair :

All nature is thy province, life thy care :

Thou mad'st the world, and dost the world repair.

Thou gladder of the mount of Cytheron, 145

Increase of Jove, companion of the sun ;

If e'er Adonis touch'd thy tender heart,

Have pity, Goddess, for thou know'st the smart.

Alas ! I have not words to tell my grief ;

To vent my sorrow, would be some relief ; 150

Light sufferings give us leisure to complain ;

We groan, but cannot speak, in greater pain.

O Goddess, tell thyself what I would say,

Thou know'st it, and I feel too much to pray.

So grant my suit, as I enforce my might ; 155

In love to be thy champion, and thy knight ;



A servant to thy sex, a slave to thee,  
 A foe profess'd to barren chastity.  
 Nor ask I fame or honour of the field,  
 Nor choose I more to vanquish than to yield : 160  
 In my divine Emilia make me blest,  
 Let fate, or partial chance, dispose the rest :  
 Find thou the manner, and the means prepare ;  
 Possession, more than conquest, is my care.  
 Mars is the warrior's god ; in him it lies, 165  
 On whom he favours to confer the prize ;  
 With smiling aspect you serenely move.  
 In your fifth orb, and rule the realm of love.  
 The fates but only spin the coarser clue,  
 The finest of the wool is left for you. 170  
 Spare me but one small portion of the twine,  
 And let the sisters cut below your line :  
 The rest among the rubbish may they sweep,  
 Or add it to the yarn of some old miser's heap.  
 But, if you this ambitious prayer deny, 175  
 (A wish, I grant, beyond mortality,)  
 Then let me sink beneath proud Arcite's arms,  
 And, I once dead, let him possess her charms.  
 Thus ended he ; then, with observance due,  
 The sacred incense on her altar threw : 180  
 The curling smoke mounts heavy from the fires ;  
 At length it catches flame, and in a blaze expires ;  
 At once the gracious goddess gave the sign,  
 Her statue shook, and trembled all the shrine :  
 Pleas'd Palamon the tardy omen took : 185  
 For, since the flames pursued the trailing smoke,  
 He knew his boon was granted ; but the day  
 To distance driven, and joy adjourn'd with long delay.  
 Now morn with rosy light had streak'd the sky.  
 Up rose the sun, and up-rose Emily ; 190  
 Address'd her early steps to Cynthia's fane,  
 In state attended by her maiden train,  
 Who bore the vests that holy rites require,  
 Incense, and odorous gums, and cover'd fire.  
 The plenteous horns with pleasant mead they crown,  
 Nor wanted aught besides in honour of the moon. 196



Now while the temple smok'd with hallow'd steam,  
They wash the virgin in a living stream ;  
The secret ceremonies I conceal,  
Uncouth, perhaps unlawful, to reveal : 200  
But such they were as Pagan use requir'd,  
Perform'd by women when the men retir'd,  
Whose eyes profane their chaste mysterious rites  
Might turn to scandal, or obscene delights.  
Well-meaners think no harm ; but for the rest, 205  
Things sacred they pervert, and silence is the best.  
Her shining hair, uncomb'd, was loosely spread,  
A crown of mastless oak adorn'd her head :  
When to the shrine approach'd, the spotless maid  
Had kindled fires on either altar laid 210  
(The rites were such as were observ'd of old,  
By Statius in his Theban story told.)  
Then kneeling with her hands across her breast,  
Thus lowly she preferr'd her chaste request.  
O Goddess, haunter of the woodland green, 215  
To whom both heaven and earth and seas are seen ;  
Queen of the nether skies, where half the year  
Thy silver beams descend, and light the gloomy sphere ;  
Goddess of maids, and conscious of our hearts,  
So keep me from the vengeance of thy darts, 220  
Which Niobe's devoted issue felt, [were dealt ;  
When hissing through the skies the feather'd deaths  
As I desire to live a virgin life,  
Nor know the name of mother or of wife.  
Thy votress from my tender years I am, 225  
And love, like thee, the woods and sylvan game.  
Like death, thou know'st, I loath the nuptial state,  
And man, the tyrant of our sex, I hate,  
A lowly servant, but a lofty mate :  
Where love is duty on the female side ; 230  
On their's mere sensual gust, and fought with surly pride.  
Now by the triple shape, as thou art seen  
In heav'n, earth, hell, and every where a queen,  
Grant this my first desire ; let discord cease,  
And make betwixt the rivals lasting peace : 235



Quench their hot fire, or far from me remove  
 The flame, and turn it on some other love :  
 Or, if my frowning stars have so decreed,  
 That one must be rejected, one succeed,  
 Make him my Lord, within whose faithful breast 240  
 Is fix'd my image, and who loves me best.  
 But, oh ! e'en that avert ! I choose it not,  
 But take it as the least unhappy lot.

A maid I am, and of thy virgin train ;  
 Oh, let me still that spotless name retain ! 245  
 Frequent the forests, thy chaste will obey,  
 And only make the beasts of chase my prey !

The flames ascend on either altar clear,  
 While thus the blameless maid address'd her pray'r.  
 When lo ! the burning fire that shone so bright, 250  
 Flew off, all sudden, with extinguish'd light,  
 And left one altar dark, a little space ;  
 Which turn'd self-kindled, and renew'd the blaze ;  
 The other victor-flame a moment stood,  
 Then fell, and lifeless left th' extinguish'd wood ; 255  
 For ever lost, the irrevocable light  
 Forsook the blackening coals, and sunk to night :  
 At either end it whistled as it flew,  
 And as the brands were green, so dropt the dew ;  
 Infected as it fell with sweat of sanguine hue. 260

The maid from that ill omen turn'd her eyes,  
 And with loud shrieks and clamours rent the skies,  
 Nor knew what signified the boding sign, [divine.  
 But found the pow'rs displeas'd, and fear'd the wrath

Then shook the sacred shrine, and sudden light 265  
 Sprung through the vaulted roof, and made the temple

The power, behold ! the power in glory shone, [bright.  
 By her bent bow and her keen arrows known ;  
 The rest, a huntress issuing from the wood,  
 Reclining on her cornel spear she stood. 270

Then gracious thus began : Dismiss thy fear,  
 And Heaven's unchang'd decrees attentive hear :  
 More pow'rful Gods have torn thee from my side,  
 Unwilling to resign, and doom'd a bride :



The two contending knights are weigh'd above ; 275  
One Mars protects; and one the Queen of Love :  
But which the man, is in the Thunderer's breast ;  
This he pronounc'd, 'tis he who loves thee best.

The fire that once extinct reviv'd again,  
Foreshews the love allotted to remain : 280

Farewel ! she said, and vanish'd from the place ;  
The sheaf of arrows shook, and rattled in the case.

Aghast at this, the royal virgin stood,  
Disclaim'd, and now no more a sister of the wood :  
But to the parting Goddess thus she pray'd ; 285  
Propitious still be present to my aid,

Nor quite abandon your once favour'd maid.  
Then sighing she return'd ; but smil'd betwixt,  
With hopes and fears, and joys with sorrows mixt.

The next returning planetary hour 290  
Of Mars, who shar'd the heptarchy of pow'r,  
His steps bold Arcite to the temple bent,  
T' adore with Pagan rites the pow'r armipotent ;  
Then prostrate, low before his altar lay,

And rais'd his manly voice, and thus began to pray :  
Strong God of Arms, whose iron sceptre sways 296

The freezing North, and Hyperborean seas,  
And Scythian colds, and Thracia's winter coast,  
Where stand thy steeds, and thou art honour'd most :  
There most ; but every where thy pow'r is known,

The fortune of the fight is all thy own : 301

Terror is thine, and wild amazement, flung  
From out thy chariot, withers e'en the strong :  
And disarray and shameful rout ensue,

And force is added to the fainting crew. 305

Acknowledg'd as thou art, accept my prayer,  
If aught I have achiev'd deserve thy care :

If to my utmost pow'r with sword and shield  
I dar'd the death, unknowing how to yield,  
And, falling in my rank, still kept the field : 310

Then let my arms prevail, by thee sustain'd,  
That Emily by conquest may be gain'd.

Have pity on my pains ; nor those unknown  
To Mars, which, when a lover, were his own.



Venus, the public care of all above, 315  
Thy stubborn heart has soften'd into love :  
Now by her blandishments and pow'rful charms,  
When yielded she lay curling in thy arms,  
E'en by thy shame, if shame it may be call'd,  
When Vulcan had thee in his net enthrall'd ; 320  
O envy'd ignominy, sweet disgrace,  
When every God that saw thee wish'd thy place ;  
By those dear pleasures, aid my arms in fight,  
And make me conquer in my patron's right :  
For I am young, a novice in the trade, 325  
The fool of love, unpractis'd to persuade :  
And want the soothing arts that catch the fair,  
But, caught myself, lie struggling in the snare :  
And she I love, or laughs at all my pain,  
Or knows her worth too well; and pays me with disdain.  
For sure I am, unless I win in arms, 331  
To stand excluded from Emilia's charms :  
Nor can my strength avail, unless by thee  
Endued by force, I gain the victory :  
Then for the fire which warm'd thy gen'rous heart,  
Pity thy subject's pains, and equal smart, 336  
So be the morrow's sweat and labour mine,  
The palm and honour of the conquest thine :  
Then shall the war, and stern debate, and strife  
Immortal, be the business of my life ; 340  
And in thy fane, the dusty spoils among,  
High on the burnish'd roof, my banner shall be hung :  
Rank'd with my champion's bucklers, and below,  
With arms revers'd, th' atchievements of my foe :  
And while these limbs the vital spirit feeds, 345  
While day to night, and night to day succeeds,  
Thy smoking altar shall be fat with food  
Of incense, and the grateful steam of blood :  
Burnt-offerings morn and evening shall be thine :  
And fires eternal in thy temple shine. 350  
The bush of yellow beard, this length of hair,  
Which from my birth inviolate I bear,  
Guileless of steel, and from the razor free,  
Shall fall a plenteous crop, reserv'd for thee.



So may my arms with victory be blest, 355  
I ask no more; let fate dispose the rest.

The champion ceas'd; there follow'd in the close  
A hollow groan: a murmuring wind arose;  
The rings of iron, that on the doors were hung,  
Sent out a jarring sound, and harshly rung: 360  
The bolted gates flew open at the blast,  
The storm rush'd in, and Arcite stood aghast:  
The flames were blown aside, yet shone they bright,  
Fann'd by the wind, and gave a ruffled light.

Then from the ground a scent began to rise, 365  
Sweet-smelling as accepted sacrifice:  
This omen pleas'd, and as the flames aspire  
With odorous incense Arcite heaps the fires:  
Nor wanted hymns to Mars, or heathen charms:  
At length the nodding statue clash'd his arms, 370  
And with a sudden sound and feeble cry,  
Half sunk, and half pronounc'd, the word of victory.  
For this, with soul devout, he thank'd the God,  
And, of success secure, return'd to his abode.

These vows thus granted, rais'd a strife above, 375  
Betwixt the God of War, and Queen of Love.  
She granting first, had right of time to plead;  
But he had granted too, nor would recede.  
Jove was for Venus; but he fear'd his wife,  
And seem'd unwilling to decide the strife; 380  
Till Saturn from his leaden throne arose,  
And found a way the difference to compose:  
Though sparing of his grace, to mischief bent,  
He seldom does a good with good intent.  
Wayward, but wise; by long experience taught 385  
To please both parties, for ill ends, he fought:  
For this advantage age from youth has won,  
As not to be outridden, though outrun.  
By fortune he was now to Venus trin'd,  
And with stern Mars in Capricorn was join'd: 390  
Of him disposing in his own abode,  
He sooth'd the Goddess, while he gall'd the God:  
Cease, daughter, to complain, and stint the strife;  
Tay Palam on shall have his promis'd wife:



And Mars, the lord of conquest, in the fight 395  
 With palm and laurel shall adorn his knight.  
 Wide is my course, nor turn I to my place,  
 Till length of time, and move with tardy pace.  
 Man feels me, when I press th' etherial plains,  
 My hand is heavy, and the wound remains, 400  
 Mine is the shipwreck, in a watery sign ;  
 And in an earthy, the dark dungeon mine.  
 Cold shivering agues, melancholy care,  
 And bitter blasting winds, and poison'd air,  
 Are mine, and wilful death, resulting from despair.  
 The throttling quinsy 'tis my star appoints, 406  
 And rheumatisms ascend to rack the joints :  
 When churls rebel against their native prince,  
 I arm their hands, and furnish the pretence ;  
 And, housing in the lion's hateful sign, 410  
 Bought senates and deserting troops are mine.  
 Mine is the privy poisoning ; I command  
 Unkindly seasons, and ungrateful land.  
 By me kings' palaces are push'd to ground,  
 And miners crush'd beneath their mines are found. 415  
 'Twas I slew Samson, when the pillar'd hall  
 Fell down, and crush'd the many with the fall.  
 My looking is the fire of pestilence,  
 That sweeps at once the people and the prince.  
 Now weep no more, but trust thy grandfire's art, 420  
 Mars shall be pleas'd, and thou perform thy part.  
 'Tis ill, though different your complexions are,  
 The family of Heaven for men should war.  
 Th' expedient pleas'd, where neither lost his right ;  
 Mars had the day, and Venus had the night. 425  
 The management they left to Chronos care ;  
 Now turn we to th' effect, and sing the war.  
 In Athens all was pleasure, mirth, and play,  
 All proper to the spring, and sprightly May :  
 Which every soul inspir'd with such delight, 430  
 'Twas jesting all the day, and love at night.  
 Heaven smil'd, and gladdened was the heart of man ;  
 And Venus had the world as when it first began.



At length in sleep their bodies they compose,  
And dreamt the future fight, and early rose. 435

Now scarce the dawning day began to spring,  
As at a signal given, the streets with clamours ring :  
At once the crowd arose ; confus'd and high  
Ev'n from the heaven was heard a shouting cry ;  
For Mars was early up, and rous'd the sky. 440

The Gods came downward to behold the wars,  
Sharpening their fights, and leaning from their stars.  
The neighing of the generous horse was heard,  
For battle by the busy groom prepar'd,  
Rustling of harness, rattling of the shield, 445  
Clattering of armour, furbish'd for the field.

Crowds to the castle mounted up the street,  
Battering the pavement with their coursers' feet :  
The greedy sight might there devour the gold  
Of glittering arms, too dazzling to behold : 450

And polish'd steel that cast the view aside,  
And crested morions, with their plummy pride.  
Knights, with a long retinue of their squires,  
In gaudy liveries march, and quaint attires.  
One lac'd the helm, another held the lance : 455

A third the shining buckler did advance.  
The courser paw'd the ground with restless feet,  
And snorting foam'd, and champ'd the golden bit.  
The smiths and armourers on palfreys ride,  
Files in their hands, and hammers at their side, 460  
And nails for loosen'd spears, and thongs for shields  
provide.

The yeoman guard the streets, in seemly bands :  
And clowns come crowding on, with cudgels in their  
hands.

The trumpets, next the gate in order plac'd,  
Attend the sign to sound the martial blast ; 465  
The palace-yard is fill'd with floating tides,  
And the last comers bear the former to the sides.  
The throng is in the midst : the common crew  
Shut out, the hall admits the better few ;  
In knots they stand, or in a rank they walk, 470  
Serious in aspect, earnest in their talk,



Factious, and favouring this or t' other side,  
 As their strong fancy or weak reason guide:  
 Their wagers back their wishes; numbers hold  
 With the fair freckled king, and beard of gold: 475  
 So vigorous are his eyes, such rays they cast,  
 So prominent his eagle's beak is plac'd.  
 But most their looks on the black monarch bend,  
 His rising muscles and his brawn commend;  
 His double-biting axe and beamy spear, 480  
 Each asking a gigantic force to rear.  
 All spoke as partial favour mov'd the mind:  
 And, safe themselves, at others' cost divin'd.  
 Wak'd by the cries, th' Athenian chief arose,  
 The knightly forms of combat to dispose; 485  
 And passing through th' obsequious guards, he fate  
 Conspicuous on a throne, sublime in state;  
 There, for the two contending knights he sent;  
 Arm'd cap-a-pee, with reverence low they bent;  
 He smil'd on both, and with superior look 490  
 Alike their offer'd adoration took.  
 The people press on every side, to see  
 Their awful prince, and hear his high decree.  
 Then signing to their heralds with his hand,  
 They gave his orders from their lofty stand. 495  
 Silence is thrice enjoin'd; then thus aloud [crowd.  
 The king at arms bespeaks the knights and listening  
 Our sovereign lord has ponder'd in his mind  
 The means to spare the blood of gentle kind;  
 And of his grace, and inborn clemency, 500  
 He modifies his first severe decree!  
 The keener edge of battle to rebate,  
 The troops for honour fighting, not for hate.  
 He wills, not death should terminate their strife:  
 And wounds, if wounds ensue, be short of life; 505  
 But issues, e'er the fight, his dread command,  
 That flings afar, and poniards hand to hand,  
 Be banish'd from the field; that none shall dare  
 With shortened sword to stab in closer war;  
 But in fair combat fight with manly strength, 510  
 Nor push with biting point, but strike at length.



The tourney is allow'd but one career,  
 Of the tough ash, with the sharp-grinded spear,  
 But knights unhors'd may rise from off the plain,  
 And fight on foot their honour to regain ; 515  
 Nor, if at mischief taken, on the ground  
 Be slain, but prisoners to the pillar bound,  
 At either barrier plac'd ; nor (captives made)  
 Be freed, or arm'd anew the fight invade.  
 The chief of either side, bereft of life, 520  
 Or yielded to his foe, concludes the strife.

Thus dooms the lord : now valiant knights and young  
 Fight each his fill with swords and maces long.

The herald ends : the vaulted firmament  
 With loud acclaims and vast applause is rent : 525  
 Heaven guard a prince so gracious and so good,  
 So just, and yet so provident of blood !

This was the general cry. The trumpets sound  
 And warlike symphony is heard around, 529

The marching troops through Athens take their way.  
 The great earl-marshal orders their array.

The fair from high the passing pomp behold ;  
 A rain of flowers is from the window's roll'd.

The casements are with golden tissue spread, 534

And horses hoofs, for earth, on silken tapestry tread ;

The king goes midmost, and the rivals ride  
 In equal rank, and close his either side.

Next after these, there rode the royal wife,  
 With Emily, the cause and the reward of strife.

The following cavalcade, by three and three, 540

Proceed by titles marshall'd in degree.

Thus through the southern gate they take their way.

And at the list arriv'd ere prime of day.

There, parting from the king, the chiefs divide, 544

And, wheeling East and West, before their many ride.

Th' Athenian monarch mounts his throne on high,

And after him the queen and Emily :

Next these the kindred of the crown are grac'd

With nearer seats, and lords by ladies plac'd,

Scarce were they seated, when with clamours loud 550

In rush'd at once a rude promiscuous crowd :



The guards and then each other overbear,  
 And in a moment throng the spacious theatre.  
 Now chang'd the jarring noise to whispers low,  
 As winds forsaking seas more softly blow ; 555  
 When at the western gate, on which the car  
 Is plac'd aloft that bears the God of war,  
 Proud Arcite entering arm'd before his train,  
 Stops at the barrier, and divides the plain.  
 Red was his banner, and display'd abroad 560  
 The bloody colours of his patron God.

At that self moment enters Palamon  
 The gate of Venus, and the rising-sun ;  
 Wav'd by the wanton winds, his banner flies,  
 All maiden white, and shares the people's eyes. 565  
 From East to West, look all the world around,  
 Two troops so match'd were never to be found :  
 Such bodies built for strength, of equal age,  
 In stature fix'd ; so proud an equipage :  
 The nicest eye could no distinction make, 570  
 Where lay th' advantage, or what side to take.

Thus rang'd, the herald for the last proclaims  
 A silence, while they answer'd to their names :  
 For so the king decreed, to shun the care,  
 The fraud of musters false, the common bane of war.  
 The tale was just, and then the gates were clos'd : 576  
 And chief to chief, and troop, to troop oppos'd.  
 The heralds last retir'd, and loudly cry'd,  
 The fortune of the field be fairly try'd.

At this, the challenger with fierce defy 580  
 His trumpet sounds ; the challeng'd makes reply :  
 With clangor rings the field, resounds the vaulted sky.  
 Their vizors clos'd, their lances in the rest,  
 Or at the helmet pointed, or the crest ;  
 They vanish from the barrier, speed the race, 585  
 And spurring see decrease the middle space.  
 A cloud of smoke envelops either host,  
 And all at once the combatants are lost :  
 Darkling they join adverse, and shock unseen,  
 Coursers with coursers jostling, men with men :



As labouring in eclipse, a while they stay,  
 Till the next blast of wind restores the day.  
 They look anew: the beauteous form of fight  
 Is chang'd, and war appears a grizly fight.  
 Two troops in fair array one moment show'd, 595  
 The next, a field with fallen bodies strow'd:  
 Not half the number in their seats are found;  
 But men and steeds lie groveling on the ground.  
 The points of spears are stuck within the shield,  
 The steeds without their riders scour the field. 600  
 The knights unhors'd, on foot renew the fight;  
 The glittering faulchions cast a gleaming light:  
 Hauberks and helms are hew'd with many a wound:  
 Out spins the streaming blood, and dyes the ground.  
 The mighty maces with such haste descend, 605  
 They break the bones, and make the solid armour bend  
 This thrusts amid the throng with furious force:  
 Down goes, at once, the horseman and the horse:  
 That courser stumbles on the fallen steed,  
 And floundering throws the rider o'er his head. 610  
 One rolls along, a foot-ball to his foes;  
 One with a broken truncheon deals his blows.  
 This halting, this disabled with his wound,  
 In triumph led, is to the pillar bound,  
 Where by the king's award he must abide: 615  
 There goes a captive led on t' other side.  
 By fits they cease; and, leaning on the lance,  
 Take breath a while, and to new fight advance.  
 Full oft the rivals met, and neither spar'd  
 His utmost force, and each forgot to ward. 620  
 The head of this was to the saddle bent,  
 The other backward to the crupper sent:  
 Both were by turns unhors'd; the jealous blows  
 Fall thick and heavy, when on foot they close.  
 So deep their faulchions bite, that every stroke 625  
 Pierc'd to the quick; and equal wounds they gave and  
 Borne far asunder by the tides of men, [took,  
 Like adamant and steel they meet again.  
 So when a tiger sucks the bullock's blood,



A famish'd lion issuing from the wood 630  
 Roars lordly fierce, and challenges the food.  
 Each claims possession, neither will obey,  
 But both their paws are fasten'd on the prey;  
 They bite, they tear, and while in vain they strive,  
 The swains come arm'd between, and both to distance  
 drive. 635

At length, as fate foredoom'd, and all things tend  
 By course of time to their appointed end;  
 So when the sun to West was far declin'd,  
 And both afresh in mortal battle join'd,  
 The strong Emetrius came in Arcite's aid, 640  
 And Palamon with odds was overlaid:  
 For, turning short, he struck with all his might  
 Full on the helmet of th' unwary knight.  
 Deep was the wound; he stagger'd with the blow,  
 And turn'd him to his unexpected foe; 645  
 Whom with such force he struck, he fell'd him down,  
 And cleft the circle of his golden crown.

But Arcite's men, who now prevail'd in fight,  
 Twice ten at once surround the single knight:  
 O'erpower'd, at length, they force him to the ground,  
 Unyielded as he was, and to the pillar bound; 651  
 And king Lycurgus, while he fought in vain  
 His friend to free, was tumbled on the plain.

Who now laments but Palamon, compell'd!  
 No more to try the fortune of the field! 655  
 And, worse than death, to view with hateful eyes,  
 His rival's conquest, and renounce the prize!

The royal judge on his tribunal plac'd,  
 Who had beheld the fight from first to last,  
 Bad cease the war; pronouncing from on high, 660  
 Arcite of Thebes had won the beauteous Emily.  
 The sound of trumpets to the voice reply'd,  
 And round the royal lists the heralds cry'd,  
 Arcite of Thebes has won the beauteous bride.

The people rend the skies with vast applause; 665  
 All own the chief, when fortune owns the cause.  
 Arcite is own'd ev'n by the Gods above,  
 And conquering Mars insults the Queen of Love.



So laugh'd he, when the rightful Titan fail'd,  
And Jove's usurping arms in heaven prevail'd. 670  
Laugh'd all the powers who favour tyranny ;  
And all the standing army of the sky.

But Venus with dejected eyes appears,  
And weeping on the lists distill'd her tears ;  
Her will refus'd, which grieves a woman most, 675  
And, in a champion foil'd, the cause of Love is lost.  
Till Saturn said, fair daughter, now be still,  
The blustering fool has satisfy'd his will ;  
His boon is given ; his knight has gain'd the day,  
But lost the prize ; th' arrears are yet to pay. 680  
Thy hour is come, and mine the care shall be  
To please thy knight, and set thy promise free.

Now while the heralds run the lists around,  
And Arcite, Arcite, heaven and earth resound ;  
A miracle (nor less it could be call'd) 685  
Their joy with unexpected sorrow pall'd.  
The victor knight had laid his helm aside,  
Part for his ease, the greater part for pride :  
Bare-headed, popularly low he bow'd,  
And paid the salutations of the crowd. 690

Then spurring at full speed, ran endlong on  
Where Theseus sate on his imperial throne ;  
Furious he drove, and upward cast his eye,  
Where next the queen was plac'd his Emily ;  
Then passing to the saddle-bow he bent : 695

A sweet regard the gracious virgin lent,  
(For women, to the brave an easy prey,  
Still follow Fortune where she leads the way) :  
Just then, from earth sprung out a flashing fire,  
By Pluto sent, at Saturn's bad desire : 700

The startling steed was seiz'd with sudden fright,  
And, bounding, o'er the pommel cast the knight ;  
Forward he flew, and pitching on his head,  
He quiver'd with his feet, and lay for dead.  
Black was his countenance in a little space, 705  
For all the blood was gather'd in his face.

Help was at hand : they rear'd him from the ground,  
And from his cumbrous arms his limbs unbound ;



Then lanc'd a vein, and watch'd returning breath ;  
 It came, but clogg'd with symptoms of his death. 710  
 The saddle-bow the noble parts had prest,  
 All bruis'd and mortify'd his manly breast.  
 Him still entranc'd, and in a litter laid,  
 They bore from field, and to his bed convey'd,  
 At length he wak'd, and, with a feeble cry, 715  
 The word he first pronounc'd was Emily.

Mean time the king, though inwardly he mourn'd,  
 In pomp triumphant to the town return'd,  
 Attended by the chiefs who fought the field  
 (Now friendly mix'd and in one troop compell'd).  
 Compos'd his looks to counterfeited cheer, 721  
 And bade them not for Arcite's life to fear.  
 But that which gladdened all the warrior-train,  
 Though most were sorely wounded, none were slain.  
 The surgeons soon despoil'd them of their arms, 725  
 And some with salves they cure, and some with charms ;  
 Foment the bruises, and the pains assuage,  
 And heal their inward hurts with sovereign daughts of  
 The king in person visits all around, [sage.  
 Comforts the sick, congratulates the sound ; 730  
 Honours the princely chiefs, rewards the rest,  
 And holds for thrice three days a royal feast.  
 None was disgrac'd ; for falling is no shame ;  
 And cowardice alone is loss of fame.

The venturous knight is from the saddle thrown ; 735  
 But 'tis the fault of fortune, not his own,  
 If crowds and palms the conquering side adorn.  
 The victor under better stars was born :  
 The brave man seeks not popular applause,  
 Nor over-power'd with arms deserts his cause ; 740  
 Unsham'd, though foil'd, he does the best he can ;  
 Force is of brutes, but honour is of man.

Thus Theseus smil'd on all with equal grace ;  
 And each was set according to his place.  
 With ease were reconcil'd the differing parts, 745  
 For envy never dwells in noble hearts.  
 At length they took their leave, the time expir'd ;  
 Well pleas'd, and to their several homes retir'd.



Meanwhile the health of Arcite still impairs ; [cares ;  
From bad proceeds to worse, and mocks the leeches'  
Swoln is his breast ; his inward pains increase, 751  
All means are us'd, and all without success.  
The clotted blood lies heavy on his heart,  
Corrupts, and there remains in spite of art ;  
Nor breathing veins, nor cupping, will prevail ; 755  
All outward remedies and inward fail :  
The mold of nature's fabric is destroy'd,  
Her vessels discompos'd, her virtue void :  
The bellows of his lungs begin to swell :  
All out of frame is every secret cell, 760  
Nor can the good receive, nor bad expel.  
Those breathing organs thus within oppress'd,  
With venom soon distend the sinews of his breast.  
Nought profits him to save abandon'd life,  
Nor vomits upward aid, nor downward laxative. 765  
The midmost region batter'd and destroy'd,  
When nature cannot work, th' effect of art is void.  
For physic can but mend our crazy state,  
Patch an old building, not a new create.  
Arcite is doom'd to die in all his pride, 770  
Must leave his youth, and yield his beauteous bride,  
Gain'd hardly, against right, and unenjoy'd.  
When 'twas declar'd all hope of life was past,  
Conscience (that of all physic works the last)  
Caus'd him to send for Emily in haste. 775  
With her, at his desire, came Palamon ;  
Then on his pillow rais'd, he thus begun.  
No language can express the smallest part  
Of what I feel, and suffer in my heart,  
For you, whom best I love and value most ; 780  
But to your service I bequeath my ghost ;  
Which from this mortal body when unty'd,  
Unseen, unheard, shall hover at your side ;  
Nor fright you waking, nor your sleep offend,  
But wait officious, and your steps attend : 785  
How I have lov'd, excuse my faultring tongue,  
My spirits feeble, and my pains are strong :



This I may say, I only grieve to die  
Because I lose my charming Emily :  
To die, when Heaven had put you in my power, 790  
Fate could not choose a more malicious hour !  
What greater curse could envious fortune give,  
Than just to die, when I began to live !  
Vain men, how vanishing a bliss we crave,  
Now warm in love, now withering in the grave ! 795  
Never, O never more to see the sun !  
Still dark, in a damp vault, and still alone !  
This fate is common ; but I lose my breath  
Near bliss, and yet not blest'd before my death.  
Farewel ; but take me dying in your arms, 800  
'Tis all I can enjoy of all your charms :  
This hand I cannot but in death resign ;  
Ah ! could I live ! but while I live 'tis mine.  
I feel my end approach, and thus embrac'd  
Am pleas'd to die ; but hear me speak my last : 805  
Ah ! my sweet foe, for you, and you alone,  
I broke my faith with injur'd Palamon.  
But love the sense of right and wrong confounds,  
Strong love and proud ambition have no bounds.  
And much I doubt, should heaven my life prolong,  
I should return to justify my wrong ; 811  
For, while my former flames remain within,  
Repentance is but want of power to sin.  
With mortal hatred I pursu'd his life,  
Nor he, nor you, were guilty of the strife : 815  
Nor I, but as I lov'd ; yet all combin'd,  
Your beauty, and my impotence of mind ;  
And his concurrent flame, that blew my fire ;  
For still our kindred souls had one desire.  
He had a moment's right in point of time ; 820  
Had I seen first, then his had been the crime,  
Fate made it mine, and justify'd his right ;  
Nor holds this earth a more deserving knight,  
For virtue, valour, and for nobler blood,  
Truth, honour, all that is compriz'd in good ; 825  
So help me Heaven, in all the world is none  
So worthy to be lov'd as Palamon.



He loves you too, with such an holy fire,  
As will not, cannot, but with life expire ;  
Our vow'd affections both have often try'd, 830  
Nor any love but your's could our's divide.  
Then, by my love's inviolable band,  
By my long suffering, and my short command :  
If e'er you plight your vows when I am gone,  
Have pity on the faithful Palamon. 835

This was his last ; for death came on amain,  
And exercis'd below his iron reign ;  
Then upward to the seat of life he goes :  
Sense fled before him, what he touch'd he froze :  
Yet could he not his closing eyes withdraw, 840  
Though less and less of Emily he saw ;  
So, speechless, for a little space he lay ;  
Then grasp'd the hand he held, and sigh'd his soul away.

But whither went his soul, let such relate  
Who search the secrets of the future state : 845  
Divines can say but what themselves believe ;  
Strong proofs they have, but not demonstrative :  
For, were all plain, then all sides must agree,  
And faith itself be lost in certainty.  
To live uprightly then is sure the best, 850  
To save ourselves, and not to damn the rest.  
The soul of Arcite went where heathens go,  
Who better live than we, though less they know.

In Palamon a manly grief appears ;  
Silent he wept, ashamed to shew his tears : 855  
Emilia shriek'd but once, and then, oppress'd  
With sorrow, sunk upon her lover's breast :  
Till Theseus in his arms convey'd with care,  
Far from so sad a sight, the swooning fair.  
'Twere loss of time her sorrow to relate ; 860  
Ill bears the sex a youthful lover's fate,  
When just approaching to the nuptial state.  
But, like a low-hung cloud, it rains so fast,  
That all at once it falls, and cannot last.  
The face of things is chang'd, and Athens now, 865  
That laugh'd so late, becomes the scene of woe ;



Matrons and maids, both sexes, every state,  
 With tears lament the kinght's untimely fate.  
 Nor greater grief in falling Troy was seen  
 For Hector's death; but Hector was not then. 870  
 Old men with dust deform their hoary hair,  
 The women beat their breasts, their cheeks they tear.  
 Why would'st thou go, with one consent they cry,  
 When thou hadst gold enough, and Emily.

Theseus himself, who should have cheer'd the grief  
 Of others, wanted now the same relief. 876

Old Egeus only could revive his son,  
 Who various changes of the world had known,  
 And strange vicissitudes of human fate,  
 Still altering, never in a steady state; 880

Good after ill, and after pain delight;  
 Alternate, like the scenes of day and night;  
 Since every man who lives is born to die,  
 And none can boast sincere felicity,  
 With equal mind what happens let us bear, 885

Nor joy nor grieve too much for things beyond our care.  
 Like pilgrims to th' appointed place we tend;  
 The world's an inn, and death the journey's end.  
 E'en kings but play; and when their part is done,  
 Some other, worse or better, mount the throne. 890

With words like these the crowd was satisfied,  
 And so they would have been had Theseus dy'd.  
 But he, their king, was labouring in his mind,  
 A fitting place for funeral pomps to find,  
 Which were in honour of the dead design'd. 895

And, after long debate, at last he found  
 (As love itself had mark'd the spot of ground)  
 That grove for ever green, that conscious land,  
 Where he with Palamon fought hand to hand:  
 That where he fed his amorous desires 900

With soft complaints, and felt his hottest fires,  
 There other flames might waste his earthly part,  
 And burn his limbs where love had burn'd his heart.

This once resolv'd, the peasants were enjoin'd,  
 Sere-wood, and firs, and dodder'd oaks to find. 905



With founding axes to the grove they go,  
 Fell, split, and lay the fuel on a row,  
 Vulcanian food : a bier is next prepar'd,  
 On which the lifeless body should be rear'd,  
 Cover'd with cloth of gold, on which was laid 910  
 The corpse of Arcite in like robes array'd.  
 White gloves were on his hands, and on his head  
 A wreath of laurel, mix'd with myrtle spread.  
 A sword keen-edg'd within his right he held,  
 The warlike emblem of the conquer'd field : 915  
 Bare was his manly visage on the bier,  
 Menac'd his countenance ; even in death severe.  
 Then to the palace-hall, they bore the knight,  
 To lie in solemn state, a public fight.  
 Groans, cries, and howlings, fill the crowded place,  
 And unaffected sorrow sat on every face. 921  
 Sad Palamon above the rest appears,  
 In sable garments, dew'd with gushing tears :  
 His auburn locks on either shoulder flow'd,  
 Which to the funeral of his friend he vow'd : 925  
 But Emily, as chief, was next his side,  
 A virgin-widow, and a mourning bride.  
 And, that the princely obsequies might be  
 Perform'd according to his high degree,  
 The steed, that bore him living to the fight, 930  
 Was trapp'd with polish'd steel, all shining bright,  
 And cover'd with th' atchievements of the knight.  
 The riders rode abreast, and one his shield,  
 His lance of cornel-wood another held ;  
 The third his bow, and, glorious to behold, 355  
 The costly quiver, all of burnish'd gold.  
 The noblest of the Grecians next appear,  
 And, weeping, on their shoulders bore the bier ;  
 With sober pace they march'd, and often staid,  
 And through the master-street the corpse convey'd. 940  
 The houses to their tops with black were spread,  
 And e'en the pavements were with mourning hid.  
 The right side of the pall old Egeus kept,  
 And on the left the royal Theseus wept :



Each bore a golden bowl of work divine, 945  
 With honey fill'd, and milk, and mix'd with ruddy wine.  
 Then Palamon, the kinsman of the slain,  
 And after him appear'd th' illustrious train.  
 To grace the pomp, came Emily the bright,  
 With cover'd fire the funeral pile to light. 950  
 With high devotion was the service made,  
 And all the rites of pagan honour paid :  
 So lofty was the pile, a Parthian bow,  
 With vigour drawn, must send the shaft below.  
 The bottom was full twenty fathom broad, 955  
 With crackling straw beneath in due proportion strow'd.  
 The fabric seem'd a wood of rising green,  
 With sulphur and bitumen cast between,  
 To feed the flames : the trees were unctious fir,  
 And mountain ash, the mother of the spear ; 960  
 The mourner yew, and builder oak were there :  
 The beech, the swimming alder, and the plane,  
 Hard box, and linden of a softer grain, [ordain.  
 And laurels, which the Gods for conquering chiefs  
 How they were rank'd, shall rest untold by me, 965  
 With nameless nymphs that liv'd in every tree ;  
 Nor how the dryads, or the woodland train,  
 Disherited, ran howling on the plain :  
 Nor how the birds to foreign seats repair'd,  
 Or beasts, that bolted out, and saw the forest bar'd ;  
 Nor how the ground, now clear'd, with ghastly fright  
 Beheld the sudden sun, a stranger to the light. 972  
 The straw, as first I said, was laid below ;  
 Of chips and sere-wood was the second row ;  
 The third of greens, and timber newly fell'd ; 975  
 The forth high stage the fragrant odours held,  
 And pearls, and precious stones, and rich array ;  
 In midst of which, embalm'd, the body lay.  
 The service sung, the maid with mourning eyes  
 The stubble fir'd ; the smouldering flames arise : 980  
 This office done, she sunk upon the ground ;  
 But what she spoke, recover'd from her swoon,  
 I want the wit in moving words to dress ;  
 But by themselves the tender sex may guess.



While the devouring fire was burning fast, 985  
 Rich jewels in the flame the wealthy cast;  
 And some their shields, and some their lances threw,  
 And gave their warrior's ghost a warrior's due.  
 Full bowls of wine, of honey, milk, and blood,  
 Were pour'd upon the pile of burning wood, 990  
 And hissing flames receive, and hungry lick the food.  
 Then thrice the mounted squadrons ride around  
 The fire; and Arcite's name they thrice resound;  
 Hail, and farewell, they shouted thrice amain, 994  
 Thrice facing to the left, and thrice they turn'd again:  
 Still as they turn'd, they beat their clattering shields;  
 The women mix their cries; and clamour fills the fields.  
 The warlike wakes continued all the night,  
 And funeral games were play'd at new returning light;  
 Who naked wrestled best, besmear'd with oil, 1000  
 Or who with gauntlets gave or took the foil,  
 I will not tell you, nor would you attend;  
 But briefly haste to my long story's end.  
 I pass the rest; the year was fully mourn'd,  
 And Palamon long since to Thebes return'd, 1005  
 When by the Grecians' general consent,  
 At Athens Theseus held his Parliament:  
 Among the laws that pass'd, it was decreed,  
 That conquer'd Thebes from bondage should be freed;  
 Reserving homage to th' Athenian throne, 1010  
 To which the sovereign summon'd Palamon,  
 Unknowing of the cause, he took his way,  
 Mournful in mind, and still in black array.

The monarch mounts the throne, and plac'd on high,  
 Commands into the court the beauteous Emily: 1015  
 So call'd, she came; the senate rose, and paid  
 Becoming reverence to the royal maid.

And first soft whispers through th' assembly went,  
 With silent wonder then they watch'd th' event:  
 All hush'd, the king arose with awful grace, 1020  
 Deep thought was in his breast, and counsel in his face.  
 At length he sigh'd; and, having first prepar'd  
 Th' attentive audience, thus his will declar'd.



The cause and spring of motion, from above,  
 Hung down on earth the golden chain of love : 1025  
 Great was th' effect, and high was his intent,  
 When peace among the jarring seeds he sent,  
 Fire, flood, and earth, and air, by this were bound,  
 And love, the common link, the new creation crown'd.  
 The chain still holds ; for, though the forms decay,  
 Eternal matter never wears away : 1031  
 The same first mover certain bounds has plac'd,  
 How long those perishable forms shall last :  
 Nor can they last beyond the time assign'd  
 By that all-seeing and all-making mind : 1035  
 Shorten their hours they may ; for will is free ;  
 But never pass th' appointed destiny.  
 So men oppress'd, when weary of their breath,  
 Throw off the burthen, and suborn their death.  
 Then, since those forms begin, and have their end,  
 On some unalter'd cause they sure depend : 1041  
 Parts of the whole are we ; but God the whole ;  
 Who gives us life and animating soul :  
 For nature cannot from a part derive  
 That being, which the whole can only give ; 1045  
 He perfect, stable ; but imperfect we,  
 Subject to change, and different in degree ;  
 Plants, beasts, and man ; and, as our organs are,  
 We more or less of his perfection share.  
 But by a long descent, th' ethereal fire 1050  
 Corrupts ; and forms, the mortal part, expire :  
 As he withdraws his virtue, so they pass,  
 And the same matter makes another mass :  
 This law th' Omnipotent Power was pleas'd to give,  
 That every kind should by succession live : 1055  
 That individuals die his will ordains ;  
 The propagated species still remains.  
 The monarch oak, the patriarch of the trees,  
 Shoots rising up, and spreads by slow degrees ;  
 Three centuries he grows and three he stays, 1060  
 Supreme in state, and in three more decays ;  
 So wears the paving pebble in the street,  
 And towns and towers their fatal periods meet :



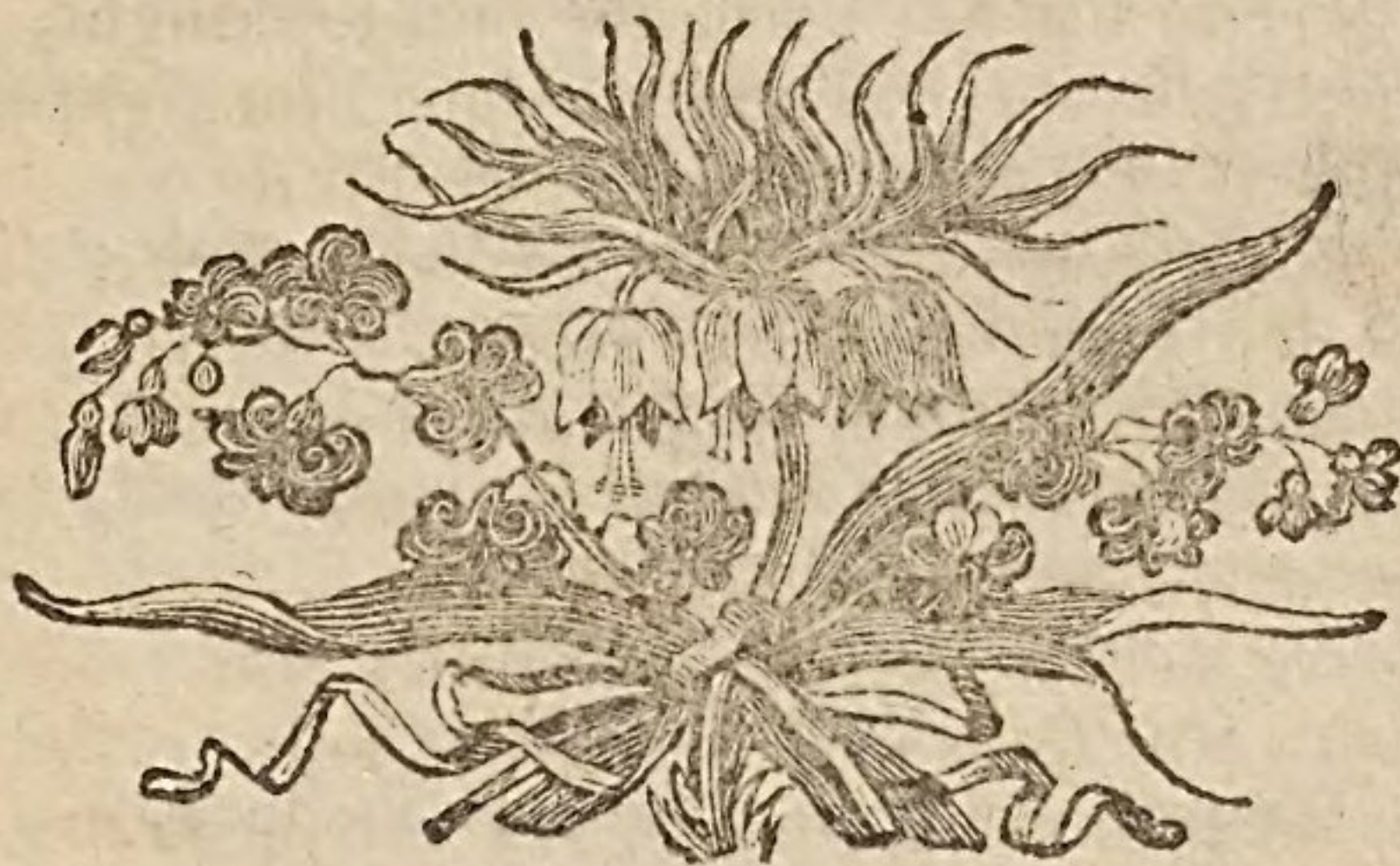
So rivers, rapid once, now naked lie,  
 Forfaken of their springs ; and leave their channels dry.  
 So man, at first a drop, dilates with heat, 1066  
 Then, form'd, the little heart begins to beat,  
 Secret he feeds, unknowing in the cell ;  
 At length, for hatching ripe, he breaks the shell,  
 And struggles into breath, and cries for aid ; 1070  
 Then, helpless, in his mother's lap is laid.  
 He creeps, he walks, and, issuing into man,  
 Grudges their life, from whence his own began :  
 Reckless of laws, affects to rule alone,  
 Anxious to reign, and restless on the throne: 1075  
 First vegetive, then feels, and reasons last ;  
 Rich of three souls, and lives all three to waste.  
 Some thus ; but thousands more in flower of age :  
 For few arrive to run the latter stage.  
 Sunk in the first, in battle some are slain, 1080  
 And others whelm'd beneath the stormy main.  
 What makes all this, but Jupiter the king,  
 At whose command we perish, and we spring ?  
 Then 'tis our best, since thus ordain'd to die,  
 To make a virtue of necessity. 1085  
 Take what he gives, since to rebel is vain ;  
 The bad grows better, which we well sustain ;  
 And could we chuse the time, and choose aright,  
 'Tis best to die, our honour at the height.  
 When we have done our ancestors no shame, 1090  
 But serv'd our friends, and well secur'd our fame :  
 Then should we wish our happy life to close,  
 And leave no more for fortune to dispose ;  
 So should we make our death a glad relief,  
 From future shame, from sickness, and from grief: 1095  
 Enjoying while we live the present hour,  
 And dying in our excellence and flower.  
 Then round our death-bed every friend should run,  
 And joyous of our conquest early won ;  
 While the malicious world with envious tears 1100  
 Should grudge our happy end, and wish it theirs.  
 Since then our Arcite is with honour dead,



Why should we mourn, that he so soon is freed,  
 Or call untimely, what the Gods decreed?  
 With grief as just, a friend may be deplor'd, 1105  
 From a foul prison to free air restor'd.  
 Ought he to thank his kinsmen or his wife,  
 Could tears recal him into wretched life?  
 Their sorrow hurts themselves; on him is lost;  
 And, worse than both, offends his happy ghost. 1110  
 What then remains, but, after past annoy,  
 To take the good vicissitude of joy?  
 To thank the gracious gods for what they give,  
 Possess our souls, and, while we live, to live?  
 Ordain we then, two sorrows to combine, 1115  
 And in one point, th' extremes of grief to join;  
 That thence resulting joy may be renew'd,  
 As jarring notes in harmony conclude.  
 Then I propose that Palamon should be  
 In marriage join'd with beauteous Emily; 1120  
 For which already I have gain'd th' assent  
 Of my free people in full Parliament.  
 Long love to her has borne the faithful knight,  
 And well deserv'd, had fortune done him right;  
 'Tis time to mend her fault; since Emily 1125  
 By Arcite's death from former vows is free:  
 If you, fair sister, ratify th' accord,  
 And take him for your husband and your lord,  
 'Tis no dishonour to confer your grace  
 On one descended from a royal race; 1130  
 And were he less, yet years of service past  
 From grateful souls exact reward at last:  
 Pity is Heaven's and your's; nor can she find  
 A throne so soft as in a woman's mind.  
 He said; she blush'd; and, as o'eraw'd by might, 1135  
 Seem'd to give Theseus what she gave the knight.  
 Then turning to the Theban, thus he said;  
 Small arguments are needful to persuade  
 Your temper to comply with my command;  
 And speaking thus, he gave Emilia's hand. 1140  
 Smil'd Venus, to behold her own true knight



Obtain the conquest, though he lost the fight;  
And bless'd with nuptial bliss the sweet laborious night.  
Eros, and Anteros, on either side,  
One fir'd the bridegroom, and one warm'd the bride;  
And long-attending Hymen from above 1146  
Shower'd on the bed the whole Idalian grove.  
All of a tenor was their after-life;  
No day discolour'd with domestic strife;  
No jealousy, but mutual truth believ'd, 1150  
Secure repose, and kindness undeceiv'd.  
Thus heaven, beyond the compass of his thought  
Sent him the blessing he so dearly bought.  
So may the Queen of Love long duty bless,  
And all true lovers find the same success. 1155





THE  
COCK AND THE FOX;  
OR,  
THE TALE OF THE NUN'S PRIEST.

THERE liv'd, as authors tell, in days of yore,  
A widow somewhat old, and very poor :  
Deep in her cell her cottage lonely stood,  
Well thatch'd, and under covert of a wood.  
This dowager, on whom my tale I found, 5  
Since last she laid her husband in the ground,  
A simple sober life, in patience, led,  
And had but just enough to buy her bread :  
But housewifing the little heaven had lent,  
She duly paid a groat for quarter rent : 10  
And pinch'd her belly, with her daughters two,  
To bring the year about with much ado.  
The cattle in her homestead were three sows,  
An ewe called Molly, and three brinded cows.  
Her parlour window stuck with herbs around, 15  
Of savoury smell ; and rushes strew'd the ground.  
A maple dresser in her hall she had,  
On which full many a slender meal she made ;  
For no delicious morsel pass'd her throat ;  
According to her cloth she cut her coat : 20  
No poignant sauce she knew, nor costly treat,  
Her hunger gave a relish to her meat :  
A sparing diet did her health assure ;  
Or, sick, a pepper posset was her cure.  
Before the day was done, her work she sped, 25  
And never went by candle-light to bed :  
With exercise she sweat ill humours out,  
Her dancing was not hinder'd by the gout.  
Her poverty was glad ; her heart content ;  
Nor knew she what the spleen or vapours meant. 30  
Of wine she never tasted thro' the year,  
But white and black was all her homely cheer :  
Brown bread, and milk (but first she skim'd her bowls)  
And rashers of sing'd bacon on the coals.



On holy days, an egg, or two at most ;  
But her ambition never reach'd to roast. 35

A yard she had with pales inclos'd about,  
Some high, some low, and a dry ditch without.  
Within this homestead liv'd, without a peer,  
For crowing loud, the noble Chanticleer ; 40  
So hight her cock, whose singing did surpass  
The merry notes of organs at the mass.

More certain was the crowing of the cock  
To number hours, than is an abbey-clock ;  
And sooner than the matten-bell was rung, 45  
He clapt his wings upon his roost, and sung ;  
For when degrees fifteen ascended right,  
By sure instinct he knew 'twas one at night.

High was his comb, and coral-red withal,  
In dents embattled like a castle wall ; 50

His bill was raven-black, and shone like jet ;  
Blue were his legs, and orient were his feet :  
White were his nails, like silver to behold,  
His body glitt'ring like the burnish'd gold.  
This gentle cock, for solace of his life, 55  
Six misses had, besides his lawful wife :

Scandal, that spares no king, though ne'er so good,  
Says, they were all of his own flesh and blood,  
His sisters both by fire and mother's side ;  
And sure their likeness shew'd them near ally'd. 60  
But make the worst, the monarch did no more  
Than all the Ptolemys had done before.

When incest is for interest of a nation,  
'Tis made no sin by holy dispensation.  
Some lines have been maintain'd by this alone, 65  
Which by their common ugliness are known.

But passing this, as from our tale apart,  
Dame Partlet was the sov'reign of his heart :  
Ardent in love, outrageous in his play,  
He feather'd her a hundred times a-day : 70  
And she, that was not only passing fair,  
But was withal discreet, and debonair,  
Resolv'd the passive doctrine to fulfil,  
Tho' loth ; and let him work his wicked will :



At board and bed was affable and kind,  
 According as their marriage-vow did bind,  
 And as the church's precept had enjoin'd.  
 Ev'n since she was a se'nnight old they say,  
 Was chaste and humble to her dying day,  
 Nor chick nor hen was known to disobey.

75

80

By this her husband's heart she did obtain;  
 What cannot beauty, join'd with virtue, gain!  
 She was his only joy, and he her pride,  
 She, when he walk'd, went pecking by his side;  
 If, spurning up the ground, he sprung a corn,  
 The tribute in his bill to her was borne.

85

But, oh! what joy it was to hear him sing  
 In summer, when the day began to spring,  
 Stretching his neck, and warbling in his throat,  
 "Solus cum sola," then was all his note.

90

For in the days of yore, the birds of parts  
 Were bred to speak, and sing, and learn the liberal  
 arts.

It happ'd that, perching on the parlour-beam,  
 Amidst his wives, he had a deadly dream,  
 Just at the dawn; and sigh'd, and groan'd so fast,  
 As every breath he drew would be his last.

95

Dame Partlet, ever nearest to his side,  
 Heard all his piteous moan, and how he cry'd  
 For help from gods and men: and sore aghast  
 She peck'd and pull'd, and waken'd him at last.  
 Dear heart, said she, for love of heaven, declare  
 Your pain, and make me partner of your care.  
 You groan, Sir, ever since the morning-light,  
 As something had disturb'd your noble spright.

100

And madam, well I might, said Chanticleer,  
 Never was shrovetide cock in such a fear,  
 Ev'n still I run all over in a sweat,  
 My princely senses not recover'd yet.

105

For such a dream I had of dire portent,  
 That much I fear my body will be shent:  
 It bodes I shall have wars and woeful strife,  
 Or in a loathsome dungeon end my life.

110



Know, dame, I dreamt, within my troubled breast,  
That in our yard I saw a murderous beast,  
That on my body would have made arrest ; 115  
With waking eyes I ne'er beheld his fellow ;  
His colour was betwixt a red and yellow :  
Tipp'd was his tail, and both his pricking ears  
Were black, and much unlike his other hairs ;  
The rest, in shape a beagle's whelp throughout, 120  
With broader forehead, and a sharper snout :  
Deep in his front were sunk his glowing eyes,  
That yet methinks I see him with surprise.  
Reach out your hand, I drop with clammy sweat,  
And lay it to my heart, and feel it beat. 125  
Now fie for shame, quoth she, by heaven above,  
Thou hast for ever lost thy lady's love ;  
No woman can endure a recreant knight,  
He must be bold by day, and free by night :  
Our sex desires a husband or a friend, 130  
Who can our honour and his own defend ;  
Wife, hardy, secret, liberal of his purse ;  
A fool is nauseous, but a coward worse :  
No bragging coxcomb, yet no baffled knight,  
How dar'st thou talk of love, and dar'st not fight ? 135  
How dar'st thou tell thy dame thou art appear'd ?  
Hast thou no manly heart, and hast a beard ?  
If ought from fearful dreams may be divin'd,  
They signify a cock of dunghill kind.  
All dreams, as in old Galen I have read, 140  
Are from repletion and complexion bred ;  
From rising fumes of indigested food,  
And noxious humours that infect the blood :  
And sure, my lord, if I can read aright,  
These foolish fancies you have had to-night 145  
Are certain symptoms (in the canting style)  
Of boiling choler, and abounding bile ;  
This yellow gall that in your stomach floats,  
Engenders all these visionary thoughts.  
When choler overflows, then dreams are bred 150  
Of flames, and all the family of red ;



Red dragons, and red beasts, in sleep we view,  
For humours are distinguish'd by their hue.  
From hence we dream of wars and warlike things,  
And wasps and hornets with their double wings. 155

Choler adust congeals our blood with fear,  
Then black bulls toss us, and black devils tear.

In sanguine airy dreams aloft we bound,  
With rheums oppress'd we sink in rivers drown'd.

More I could say, but thus conclude my theme, 160  
The dominating humour makes the dream,  
Cato was in his time accounted wise,  
And he condemns them all for empty lies.

Take my advice, and when we fly to ground,  
With laxatives preserve your body sound, 165  
And purge the peccant humours that abound.

I should be loth to lay you on a bier;  
And though there lives no 'pothecary near,  
I dare for once prescribe for your disease,  
And save long bills, and a damn'd doctor's fees. 170

Two sovereign herbs which I by practice know  
And both at hand (for in our yard they grow);  
On peril of my soul shall rid you wholly  
Of yellow choler, and of melancholy:

You must both purge and vomit; but obey, 175  
And for the love of heaven make no delay.

Since hot and dry in your complexion join,  
Beware the sun when in a vernal sign;

For when he mounts exalted in the ram,  
If then he finds your body in a flame, 180

Replete with choler, I dare lay a groat,  
A tertian ague is at least your lot.

Perhaps a fever (which the Gods forefend)  
May bring your youth to some untimely end:

And therefore, sir, as you desire to live, 185  
A day or two before your laxative,

Take just three worms, nor under nor above,  
Because the Gods unequal numbers love.

These digestives prepare you for your purge;  
Of sumetery, centaury, and spurge, 190



And of ground-ivy add a leaf or two,  
 All which within our yard or garden grow ;  
 Eat these, and be, my lord, of better cheer ;  
 Your father's son was never born to fear.

Madam, quoth he, grammercy, for your care, 195  
 But Cato, whom you quoted, you may spare :  
 'Tis true, a wise and worthy man he seems,  
 And, as you say, gave no belief to dreams:  
 But other men of more authority,  
 And, by th' immortal powers, as wise as he, 200  
 Maintain, with sounder sense, that dreams forbode ;  
 For Homer plainly says they come from God.  
 Nor Cato said it: but some modern fool  
 Impos'd in Cato's name on boys at school.

Believe me, madam, morning dreams foreshew 20  
 Th' events of things, and future weal or woe :  
 Some truths are not by reason to be try'd,  
 But we have sure experience for our guide.  
 An ancient author, equal with the best,  
 Relates this tale of dreams among the rest. 210

Two friends or brothers, with devout intent,  
 On some far pilgrimage together went.  
 It happen'd so that, when the sun was down,  
 They just arriv'd by twilight at a town :  
 That day had been the baiting of a bull, 215  
 'Twas at a feast, and every inn so full  
 That no void room in chamber, or on ground,  
 And but one sorry bed was to be found :  
 And that so little it would hold but one,  
 Though till this hour they never lay alone. 220

So were they forc'd to part ; one stay'd behind,  
 His fellow sought what lodging he could find :  
 At last he found a stall where oxen stood,  
 And that he rather chose than lie abroad.  
 'Twas in a farther yard without a door ; 225  
 But, for his ease, well litter'd was the floor.

His fellow, who the narrow bed had kept,  
 Was weary, and without a rocker slept :  
 Supine he snor'd, but in the dead of night,  
 He dreamt his friend appear'd before his sight, 230



Who, with his ghastly look and doleful cry,  
Said, Help me, brother, or this night I die :  
Arise and help, before all help be vain,  
Or in an ox's stall I shall be slain.

Rous'd from his rest, he waken'd in a start, 235  
Shivering with horror, and with aching heart ;  
At length to cure himself by reason tries ;  
'Tis but a dream, and what are dreams but lies ?  
So thinking, chang'd his side, and clos'd his eyes.  
His dream returns ; his friend-appears again : 240  
The murderers come, now help, or I am slain :  
'Twas but a vision still, and visions are but vain.  
He dreamt the third : but now his friend appear'd  
Pale, naked, pierc'd with wounds, with blood be-  
smear'd :

Thrice warn'd, awake, said he, relief is late, 245  
'The deed is done ; but thou revenge my fate :  
Tardy of aid, unseal thy heavy eyes,  
Awake, and with the dawning day arise :  
Take to the western gate thy ready way,  
For by that passage they my corpse convey : 250  
My corpse is in a tumbril laid, among  
The filth and ordure, and inclos'd with dung :  
'That cart arrest, and raise a common cry ;  
For sacred hunger of my gold, I die :  
Then shew'd his grisly wound : and last he drew 255  
A piteous sigh, and took a long adieu.

The frightened friend arose by break of day,  
And found the stall where late his fellow lay.  
Then of his impious host inquiring more,  
Was answer'd that his guest was gone before : 260  
Muttering, he went, said he, by morning light,  
And much complain'd of his ill rest by night.  
This rais'd suspicion in the pilgrim's mind ;  
Because all hosts are of an evil kind ;

And oft to share the spoils with robbers join'd, 265  
His dream confirm'd his thought : with troubled look  
Straight to the western gate his way he took ;  
There, as his dream foretold, a cart he found,  
That carry'd compost forth to dung the ground.



This, when the pilgrim saw, he stretch'd his throat,  
 And cry'd out murder with a yelling note. 271  
 My murder'd fellow in this cart lies dead,  
 Vengeance and justice on the villain's head.  
 Ye magistrates, who sacred laws dispense,  
 On you I call, to punish this offence. 275

The word thus given, within a little space,  
 The mob came roaring out, and throng'd the place ;  
 All in a trice they cast the cart to ground,  
 And in the dung the murder'd body found ;  
 Though breathless warm, and reeking from the wound.  
 Good heaven, whose darling attribute we find 281  
 Is boundless grace, and mercy to mankind,  
 Abhors the cruel ; and the deeds of night  
 By wonderous ways reveals in open light :  
 Murder may pass unpunish'd for a time, 285  
 But tardy justice will o'ertake the crime.  
 And oft a speedier pain the guilty feels :  
 The hue and cry of heaven pursues him at the heels :  
 Fresh from the fact, as in the present case,  
 The criminals are seiz'd upon the place : 290  
 Carter and host confronted face to face.  
 Stiff in denial, as the law appoints,  
 On engines they distend their tortur'd joints :  
 So was confession forc'd, th' offence was known,  
 And public justice on th' offenders done. 295

Here may you see that visions are to dread ;  
 And in the page that follows this, I read  
 Of two young merchants, whom the hope of gain  
 Induc'd in partnership to cross the main :  
 Waiting till willing winds their sails supply'd, 300  
 Within a trading town they long abide,  
 Full fairly situate on a haven's side.  
 One evening it befel, that looking out,  
 The wind they long had wish'd was come about :  
 Well pleas'd they went to rest ; and if the gale 305  
 Till morn continued, both resolv'd to sail.  
 But as together in a bed they lay,  
 The younger had a dream at break of day.



A man he thought stood frowning at his side :  
 Who warn'd him for his safety to provide, 310  
 Nor put to sea, but safe on shore abide.

I come, thy genius, to command thy stay ;  
 Trust not the winds, for fatal is the day,  
 And death unhop'd attends the watery way.

The vision said, and vanish'd from his sight : 315  
 The dreamer waken'd in a mortal fright :

Then pull'd his drowsy neighbour, and declar'd  
 What in his slumber he had seen and heard.

His friend smil'd scornful, and with proud contempt  
 Rejects as idle what his fellow dreamt. 320

Stay, who will stay ; for me no fears restrain,

Who follow Mercury the god of gain ;

Let each man do as to his fancy seems,

I wait not, I, till you have better dreams.

Dreams are but interludes which fancy makes ; 325

When monarch Reason sleeps, this mimic wakes :

Compounds a medley of disjointed things,

A mob of cobblers, and a court of kings :

Light fumes are merry, grosser fumes are sad :

Both are the reasonable soul run mad ; 330

And many monstrous forms in sleep we see,

That neither were, nor are, nor e'er can be.

Sometimes forgotten things long cast behind

Rush forward in the brain, and come to mind.

The nurse's legends are for truth's receiv'd, 335

And the man dreams but what the boy believ'd.

Sometimes we but rehearse a former play,

The night restores our actions done by day ;

As hounds in sleep will open for their prey.

In short, the farce of dreams is of a piece, 340

Chimeras all ; and more absurd, or less :

You, who believe in tales, abide alone ;

Whate'er I get this voyage is my own.

Thus while he spoke, he heard the shouting crew

That call'd aboard, and took his last adieu. 345

The vessel went before a merry gale,

And for quick passage put on every sail :



But when least fear'd, and e'en in open day,  
 The mischief overtook her in the way :  
 Whether she sprung a leak, I cannot find,  
 Or whether she was overset with wind,  
 Or that some rock below her bottom rent ;  
 But down at once with all her crew she went :  
 Her fellow ships from far her loss descry'd ;  
 But only she was sunk, and all were safe beside. 355

By this example you are taught again,  
 That dreams and visions are not always vain :  
 But if, dear Partlet, you are still in doubt,  
 Another tale shall make the former out.  
 Kenelm, the son of Kenulph, Mercia's king, 360  
 Whose holy life the legends loudly sing,  
 Warn'd in a dream, his murder did foretel  
 From point to point as after it befel :  
 All circumstances to his nurse he told  
 (A wonder from a child of seven years old) 365  
 The dream with horror heard, the good old wife  
 From treason counsel'd him to guard his life ;  
 But close to keep the secret in his mind,  
 For a boy's vision small belief would find.  
 The pious child, by promise bound, obey'd, 370  
 Nor was the fatal murder long delay'd :  
 By Quenda slain, he fell before his time,  
 Made a young martyr by his sister's crime.  
 The tale is told by venerable Bede,  
 Which at your better leisure you may read. 375

Macrobius too relates the vision sent  
 To the great Scipio, with the fam'd event :  
 Objections makes, but after makes replies,  
 And adds, that dreams are often prophecies.

Of Daniel you may read in holy writ, 380  
 Who, when the king his vision did forget,  
 Could word for word the wonderous dream repeat.  
 Nor less of patriarch Joseph understand,  
 Who by a dream enslav'd the Egyptian land ;  
 The years of plenty and of dearth foretold, 385  
 When, for their bread, their liberty they sold.



Nor must th' exalted butler be forgot,  
Nor he whose dream presag'd his hanging lot.  
And did not Cræsus the same death foresee,  
Rais'd in his vision on a lofty tree? 390  
The wife of Hector, in his utmost pride,  
Dreamt of his death the night before he dy'd;  
Well was he warn'd from battle to refrain,  
But men to death decreed are warn'd in vain:  
He dar'd the dream, and by his fatal foe was slain. 395  
Much more I know, which I forbear to speak,  
For see the ruddy day begins to break;  
Let this suffice, that plainly I foresee  
My dream was bad, and bodes adversity:  
But neither pills nor laxatives I like, 400  
They only serve to make the well man sick:  
Of these his gain the sharp physican makes,  
And often gives a purge, but seldom takes:  
They not correct, but poison all the blood,  
And ne'er did any but the doctors good. 405  
Their tribe, trade, trinkets, I defy them all;  
With every work of 'pothecary's hall.  
These melancholy matters I forbear;  
But let me tell thee, Partlet, mine, and swear  
That when I view the beauties of thy face, 410  
I fear not death, nor dangers, nor disgrace:  
So may my soul have bliss, as when I spy  
The scarlet red about thy partridge eye,  
While thou art constant to thy own true knight,  
While thou art mine, and I am thy delight, 415  
All sorrows at thy presence take their flight.  
For true it is, as "in principio,  
"Mulier est hominis confusio."  
Madam, the meaning of this Latin is,  
That woman is to man his sovereign bliss. 420  
For when by night I feel your tender side,  
Though for the narrow perch I cannot ride,  
Yet I have such a solace in my mind,  
That all my boding cares are cast behind;  
And e'en already I forget my dream: 425  
He said, and downward flew from off the beam:



For day-light now began apace to spring,  
The thrush to whistle, and the lark to sing.  
Then crowing clapp'd his wings, th' appointed call  
To chuck his wives together in the hall. 430

By this the widow had unbarr'd the door,  
And Chanticleer went strutting out before,  
With royal courage, and with heart so light,  
As shew'd he scorn'd the visions of the night.  
Now roaming in the yard he spurn'd the ground, 435  
And gave to Partlet the first grain he found,  
Then often feather'd her with wanton play,  
And trod her twenty times e'er prime of day;  
And took by turns, and gave so much delight,  
Her sisters pin'd with envy at the sight. 440  
He chuck'd again, when other corns he found,  
And scarcely deign'd to set a foot to ground.  
But swagger'd like a lord about his hall,  
And his seven wives came running at his call.

'Twas now the month in which the world began  
(If March beheld the first created man) 446  
And since the vernal equinox, the sun,  
In Aries twelve degrees, or more, had run;  
When casting up his eyes against the light,  
Both month, and day, and hour he measur'd right;  
And told more truly than th' Ephemeris : 451  
For art may err, but nature cannot miss.  
Thus numbering times and seasons in his breast,  
His second crowing the third hour confess'd.  
Then turning, said to Partlet, See, my dear, 455  
How lavish nature has adorn'd the year;  
How the pale primrose and blue violet spring,  
And birds essay their throats disus'd to sing:  
All these are ours; and I with pleasure see  
Man strutting on two legs, and aping me : 460  
An unfledg'd creature, of a lumpish frame,  
Endow'd with fewer particles of flame;  
Our dame sits couring o'er a kitchen fire,  
I draw fresh air, and nature's works admire:  
And e'en this day in more delight abound, 465  
Than, since I was an egg, I ever found.



The time shall come when Chanticleer shall wish  
His words unsaid, and hate his boasted bliss :  
The crested bird shall by experience know,  
Jove made not him his master-piece below ; 470  
And learn the latter end of joy is woe.

The vessel of his bliss to dregs is run,  
And heaven will have him taste his other tun.

Ye wise, draw near, and hearken to my tale,  
Which proves, that oft the proud by flattery fall :  
The legend is as true I undertake 476  
As Tristran is, and Launcelot of the lake :  
Which all our ladies in such reverence hold,  
As if in book of martyrs it were told.

A fox full-fraught with seeming sanctity, 480  
That fear'd an oath, but, like the devil, would lie ;  
Who look'd like Lent, and had the holy leer,  
And durst not sin before he said his prayer ;  
This pious cheat, that never suck'd the blood,  
Nor chew'd the flesh of lambs, but when he could ;  
Had pass'd three summers in the neighbouring wood :  
And musing long, whom next to circumvent, 487  
On Chanticleer his wicked fancy bent :  
And in his high imagination cast  
By stratagem to gratify his taste. 490

The plot contriv'd, before the break of day,  
Saint Reynard through the hedge had made his way ;  
The pale was next, but proudly with a bound  
He leap'd the fence of the forbidden ground ;  
Yet, fearing to be seen, within a bed 495  
Of coleworts he conceal'd his wily head ;  
Then sculk'd till afternoon, and watch'd his time,  
(As murderers use) to perpetrate his crime.

O hypocrite, ingenious to destroy,  
O traitor, worse than Sinon was to Troy ; 500  
O vile subverter of the Gallic reign,  
More false than Gano was to Charlemagne !  
O Chanticleer, in an unhappy hour  
Didst thou forsake the safety of thy bower :  
Better for thee thou hadst believ'd thy dream, 505  
And not that day descended from the beam !



But here the doctors eagerly dispute :  
Some hold predestination absolute :  
Some clerks maintain, that heaven at first foresees,  
And in the virtue of foresight decrees. 510  
If this be so, then prescience binds the will,  
And mortals are not free to good or ill :  
For what he first foresaw he must ordain,  
Or its eternal prescience may be vain :  
As bad for us, as prescience had not been : 515  
For first or last, he's author of the sin.  
And who says that, let the blaspheming man  
Say worse e'en of the devil if he can.  
For how can that eternal Power be just  
To punish man, who sins because he must ? 520  
Or, how can he reward a virtuous deed,  
Which is not done by us ; but first decreed.  
I cannot bolt this matter to the bran,  
As Bradwardin and holy Austin can ;  
If prescience can determine actions so 525  
That we must do, because he did foreknow,  
Or that, foreknowing, yet our choice is free,  
Not forc'd to sin by strict necessity ;  
This strict necessity they simple call,  
Another sort there is conditional. 530  
The first so binds the will, that things foreknown  
By spontaneity, not choice, are done.  
Thus galley-slaves tug willing at their oar,  
Content to work, in prospect of the shore ;  
But would not work at all if not constrain'd before.  
That other does not liberty constrain, 536  
But man may either act, or may refrain.  
Heaven made us agents free to good or ill,  
And forc'd it not, though he foresaw the will.  
Freedom was first bestow'd on human race, 540  
And prescience only held the second place.  
If he could make such agents wholly free,  
I not dispute, the points too high for me ;  
For heaven's unfathom'd power what man can sound,  
Or put to his omnipotence a bound ? 545



He made us to his image, all agree ;  
That image is the soul, and that must be  
Or not the Maker's image, or be free.  
But whether it were better man had been  
By nature bound to good, not free to sin, 550  
I wave for fear of splitting on a rock.

The tale I tell is only of a cock ;  
Who had not run the hazard of his life,  
Had he believ'd his dream, and not his wife :  
For women, with a mischief to their kind, 555  
Pervert, with bad advice, our better mind.  
A woman's counsel brought us first to woe,  
And made her man his paradise forego,  
Where at heart's ease he liv'd ; and might have been  
As free from sorrow as he was from sin. 560

For what the devil had their sex to do,  
That, born to follow, they presum'd to know,  
And could not see the serpent in the grass ?  
But I myself presume, and let it pass.

Silence in times of suffering is the best, 565  
'Tis dangerous to disturb an hornet's nest ;  
In other authors you may find enough,  
But all they say of dames is idle stuff.  
Legends of lying wits together bound,  
The wife of Bath would throw them to the ground ;  
These are the words of Chanticleer, not mine, 571  
I honour dames, and think their sex divine.

Now to continue what my tale begun :  
Lay madam Partlet, basking in the sun,  
Breast-high in sand, her sisters, in a row, 575  
Enjoy'd the beams above, the warmth below,  
The cock, that of his flesh was ever free,  
Sung merrier than the mermaid in the sea :  
And so besel, that as he cast his eye,  
Among the coleworts on a butterfly, 580  
He saw false Reynard where he lay full low :  
I need not swear he had no list to crow :  
But cry'd, cock, cock, and gave a sudden start,  
As sore dismay'd, and frighted at his heart ;



For birds and beasts, inform'd by nature, know 585  
Kinds opposite to theirs, and fly their foe :  
So Chanticleer, who never saw a fox,  
Yet shunn'd him as a sailor shuns the rocks.

But the false loon who could not work his will  
By open force, employ'd his flatt'ring skill ; 590  
I hope, my lord, said he, I not offend ;  
Are you afraid of me that am your friend ?  
I were a beast indeed to do you wrong,  
I, who have lov'd and honour'd you so long :  
Stay, gentle Sir, nor take a false alarm, 595  
For on my soul, I never meant you harm.

I come to spy, nor as a traitor press,  
To learn the secrets of your soft recess :  
Far be from Reynard so profane a thought,  
But by the sweetness of your voice was brought : 600  
For, as I bid my beads, by chance I heard  
The song as of an angel in the yard ;  
A song that would have charm'd th' infernal gods,  
And banish'd horror from the dark abodes ;  
Had Orpheus sung it in the nether sphere, 605  
So much the hymn had pleas'd the tyrant's ear,  
The wife had been detain'd to keep the husband there.

My lord, your sire familiarly I knew,  
A peer deserving such a son as you :  
He, with your lady mother, (whom heaven rest) 610  
Has often grac'd my house, and been my guest :  
To view his living features does me good ;  
For I am your poor neighbour in the wood ;  
And in my cottage should be proud to see  
The worthy heir of my friend's family. 615

But since I speak of singing, let me say,  
As with an upright heart I safely may,  
That, save yourself, there breathes not on the ground  
One like your father for a silver sound.  
So sweetly would he wake the winter day, 620  
That matrons to the church mistook their way,  
And thought they heard the merry organ play.  
And he, to raise his voice with artful care,  
(What will not beaux attempt to please the fair ?)



On tiptoe stood to sing with greater strength, 625  
And stretch'd his comely neck at all the length :  
And while he strain'd his voice to pierce the skies,  
As saints in raptures use, would shut his eyes,  
That the sound striving through the narrow throat,  
His winking might avail to mend the note. 630

By this, in song, he never had his peer,  
From sweet Cecilia down to Chanticleer ;  
Not Maro's muse, who sung the mighty man,  
Nor Pindar's heavenly lyre, nor Horace when a swan.  
Your ancestors proceed from race divine : 635  
From Brennus and Belinus is your line ;  
Who gave to sovereign Rome such loud alarms,  
That ev'n the priests were not excus'd from arms.

Besides, a famous monk of modern times  
Has left of cocks recorded in his rhymes, 640  
That of a parish-priest the son and heir,  
(When sons of priests were from the proverb clear)  
Affronted once a cock of noble kind,  
And either lam'd his legs, or struck him blind ;  
For which the clerk his father was disgrac'd, 645  
And in his benefice another plac'd.  
Now sing, my lord, if not for love of me,  
Yet for the sake of sweet saint charity ;  
Make hills and dales and earth and heaven rejoice,  
And emulate your father's angel voice. 650

The cock was pleas'd to hear him speak so fair,  
And proud beside, as solar people are ;  
Nor could the treason from the truth descry,  
So was he ravish'd with this flattery :  
So much the more, as from a little elf, 655  
He had a high opinion of himself ;  
Though sickly, slender, and not large of limb,  
Concluding all the world was made for him.

Ye princes rais'd by poets to the gods,  
And Alexander'd up in lying odes, 660  
Believe not every flattering knave's report,  
There's many a Reynard lurking in the court ;  
And he shall be receiv'd with more regard  
And listen'd to, than modest truth is heard.



This Chanticleer, of whom the story sings, 665  
 Stood high upon his toes and clapp'd his wings;  
 Then stretch'd his neck, and wink'd with both his eyes,  
 Ambitious as he fought th' Olympic prize,  
 But, while he pain'd himself to raise his note,  
 False Reynard rush'd, and caught him by the throat.  
 Then on his back he laid the precious load, 671  
 And sought his wonted shelter of the wood:  
 Swiftly he made his way, the mischief done,  
 Of all unheeded, and pursued by none.

Alas, what stay is there in human state, 675  
 Or who can shun inevitable fate?  
 The doom was written, the decree was past,  
 Ere the foundations of the world were cast!  
 In Aries though the sun exalted stood,  
 His patron planet to procure his good; 680  
 Yet Saturn was his mortal foe, and he,  
 In Libra rais'd, oppos'd the same degree:  
 The rays both good and bad, of equal power,  
 Each thwarting other made a mingled hour.

On Friday morn he dreamt this direful dream, 685  
 Cross to the worthy native, in his scheme!  
 Ah blissful Venus, goddess of delight,  
 How couldst thou suffer thy devoted knight,  
 On thy own day to fall by foe oppress'd,  
 The wight of all the world who serv'd thee best? 690  
 Who, true to love, was all for recreation,  
 And minded not the work of propagation.  
 Gaufride, who could'st so well in rhyme complain  
 The death of Richard with an arrow slain,  
 Why had not I thy muse, or thou my heart, 695  
 To sing this heavy dirge with equal art!  
 That I like thee on Friday might complain;  
 For on that day was Cœur de Lion slain.

Not louder cries, when Ilium was in flames,  
 Were sent to heaven by woeful Trojan dames, 700  
 When Pyrrhus tofs'd on high his burnish'd blade,  
 And offer'd Priam to his father's shade,  
 Than for the cock the widow'd poultry made.



Fair Partlet first, when he was borne from fight,  
 With sovereign shrieks, bewail'd her captive knight:  
 Far louder than the Carthaginian wife, 706  
 When Asdrubal her husband lost his life,  
 When she beheld the smouldring flames ascend,  
 And all the Punic glories at an end:  
 Willing into the fires she plung'd her head, 710  
 With greater ease than others seek their bed.  
 Not more aghast the matrons of renown,  
 When tyrant Nero burn'd th' imperial town,  
 Shriek'd for the downfall in a doleful cry,  
 For which their guiltless lords were doom'd to die. 715

Now to my story I return again:

The trembling widow, and her daughters twain,  
 This woeful cackling cry with horror heard,  
 Of those distracted damsels in the yard;  
 And starting up beheld the heavy fight, 720  
 How Reynard to the forest took his flight,  
 And cross his back, as in triumphant scorn,  
 The hope and pillar of the house was borne.

The fox, the wicked fox, was all the cry:  
 Out from his house ran every neighbour nigh; 725  
 The vicar first, and after him the crew,  
 With forks and staves, the felon to pursue.  
 Ran Coll our dog, and Talbot with the band,  
 And Malkin, with her distaff in her hand;  
 Ran cow and calf, and family of hogs, 730  
 In panic horror of pursuing dogs;  
 With many a deadly grunt and doleful squeak,  
 Poor swine, as if their pretty hearts would break.  
 The shouts of men, the women in dismay,  
 With shrieks augment the terror of the day. 735  
 The ducks that heard the proclamation cry'd,  
 And fear'd a persecution might betide,  
 Full twenty mile from town their voyage take,  
 Obscure in rushes of the liquid lake.

The geese fly o'er the barn; the bees in arms. 740  
 Drive headlong from their waxen cells in swarms.  
 Jack Straw at London-stone, with all his rout,  
 Struck not the city with so loud a shout;



DRYDEN'S POEMS.



And starting up beheld the heavy sight,  
How Reynard to the forest took his flight,  
And cross his back, as in triumphant scorn,  
The hope and pillar of the house was borne.  
*Vide Cook and the Fox Vol. III. Page 158. L. 720.*







Not when with English hate they did pursue  
A Frenchman or an unbelieving Jew : 745  
Not when the welkin rung with one and all ;  
And echoes bounded back from Fox's hall :  
Earth seem'd to sink beneath, and heaven above to fall.  
With might and main they chas'd the murderous fox,  
With brazen trumpets, and inflated box, 750  
To kindle Mars with military sounds,  
Nor wanted horns t' inspire sagacious hounds.

But see how Fortune can confound the wise,  
And, when they least expect it, turn the dice.  
The captive cock who scarce could draw his breath, 755  
And lay within the very jaws of death ;  
Yet in this agony his fancy wrought,  
And fear supply'd him with this happy thought :  
Your's is the prize, victorious prince, said he,  
The vicar my defeat, and all the village see ; 760  
Enjoy your friendly fortune while you may,  
And bid the churls that envy you the prey  
Call back their mungril curs, and cease their cry,  
See fools, the shelter of the wood is nigh,  
And Chanticleer in your despight shall die : 765  
He shall be pluck'd and eaten to the bone.

'Tis well advis'd, in faith it shall be done ;  
This Reynard said : but, as the word he spoke,  
The prisoner with a spring from prison broke :  
Then stretch'd his feather'd fans with all his might, 770  
And to the neighbouring maple wing'd his flight ;  
Whom when the traitor safe on tree beheld,  
He curs'd the gods, with shame and sorrow fill'd ;  
Shame for his folly, sorrow out of time,  
For plotting an unprofitable crime ; 775  
Yet, mastering both, th' artificer of lies  
Renews th' assault, and his last battery tries.

Though I, said he, did ne'er in thought offend,  
How justly may my lord suspect his friend !  
Th' appearance is against me, I confess, 780  
Who seemingly have put you in distress :  
You, if your goodness does not plead my cause,  
May think I broke all hospitable laws,



To bear you from your palace-yard by might,  
 And put your noble person in a fright : 785  
 This, since you take it ill, I must repent,  
 Though heaven can witness, with no bad intent :  
 I practis'd it, to make you taste your cheer  
 With double pleasure, first prepar'd by fear.  
 So loyal subjects often seize their prince, 790  
 Forc'd (for his good) to seeming violence,  
 Yet mean his sacred person not the least offence.  
 Descend ; so help me Jove as you shall find  
 That Reynard comes of no dissembling kind.

Nay, quoth the cock ; but I beshrew us both, 795  
 If I believe a saint upon his oath :  
 An honest man may take a knave's advice,  
 But idiots only may be cozen'd twice :  
 Once warn'd is well bewar'd ; not flattering lies  
 Shall sooth me more to sing with winking eyes, 800  
 And open mouth, for fear of catching flies.  
 Who blindfold walks upon a river's brim,  
 When he should see, has he deserv'd to swim ?  
 Better, sir cock, let all contention cease,  
 Come down, said Reynard, let us treat of peace. 805  
 A peace with all my soul, said Chanticleer ;  
 But, with your favour, I will treat it here :  
 And lest the truce with treason should be mixt,  
 'Tis my concern to have the tree betwixt.

## THE MORAL.

In this plain fable you th' effect may see 810  
 Of negligence, and fond credulity :  
 And learn besides of flatterers to beware,  
 Then most pernicious when they speak too fair.  
 The cock and fox the fool and knave imply ;  
 The truth is moral, though the tale a lie. 815  
 Who spoke in parables I dare not say ;  
 But sure he knew it was a pleasing way,  
 Sound sense, by plain example, to convey.  
 And in a heathen author we may find,  
 That pleasure with instruction should be join'd ;  
 So take the corn, and leave the chaff behind. 821



# THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF :

OR,

## THE LADY IN THE ARBOUR.

A VISION.

NOW turning from the wint'ry signs, the sun  
His course exalted through the ram had run,  
And, whirling up the skies, his chariot drove  
Through Taurus and the lightsome realms of love ;  
Where Venus from her orb descends in showers, 5  
To glad the ground, and paint the fields with flowers :  
When first the tender blades of grass appear,  
And buds, that yet the blast of Eurus fear,  
Stand at the door of life, and doubt to clothe the year :  
Till gentle heat, and soft repeated rains, 10  
Make the green blood to dance within their veins :  
Then, at their call embolden'd, out they come,  
And swell the germs, and burst the narrow room ;  
Broader and broader yet, their blooms display,  
Salute the welcome sun, and entertain the day. 15  
Then from their breathing souls, the sweets repair,  
To scent the skies, and purge th' unwholesome air :  
Joy spreads the heart, and, with a general song,  
Spring issues out, and leads the jolly months along.

In that sweet season, as in bed I lay, 20  
And sought in sleep to pass the night away,  
I turn'd my weary'd side, but still in vain,  
Though full of youthful health, and void of pain :  
Cares I had none, to keep me from my rest,  
For love had never enter'd in my breast ; 25  
I wanted nothing fortune could supply,  
Nor did she slumber till that hour deny.  
I wonder'd then, but after found it true,  
Much joy had dry'd away the balmy dew :  
Seas would be pools, without the brushing air, 30  
To curl the waves : and sure some little care,  
Should weary nature so, to make her want repair.

When Chanticleer the second watch had sung,  
Scorning the scorner sleep, from bed I sprung ;



And dressing, by the moon, in loose array, 35  
Pass'd out in open air, preventing day,  
And sought a goodly grove, as fancy led my way.  
Straight as a line in beauteous order stood  
Of oaks unshorn a venerable wood ;  
Fresh was the grass beneath, and every tree 40  
At distance planted in a due degree,  
Their branching arms in air with equal space  
Stretch'd to their neighbours with a long embrace ;  
And the new leaves on every bough were seen,  
Some ruddy colour'd, some of lighter green. 45  
The painted birds, companions of the spring,  
Hopping from spray to spray, were heard to sing.  
Both eyes and ears receiv'd a like delight,  
Enchanting music, and a charming sight.  
On Philomel I fix'd my whole desire, 50  
And listen'd for the queen of all the quire ;  
Fain would I hear her heavenly voice to sing ;  
And wanted yet an omen to the spring.  
Attending long in vain, I took the way,  
Which through a path but scarcely printed lay ; 55  
In narrow mazes oft it seem'd to meet,  
And look'd as lightly press'd by fairy feet.  
Wandering, I walk'd alone, for still methought  
To some strange end so strange a path was wrought :  
At last it led me where an arbour stood, 60  
The sacred receptacle of the wood :  
This place unmark'd, though oft I walk'd the green,  
In all my progress I had never seen :  
And, seiz'd at once with wonder and delight,  
Gaz'd all around me, new to the transporting sight. 65  
'Twas bench'd with turf, and goodly to be seen,  
The thick young grass arose in fresher green :  
The mound was newly made, no sight could pass  
Betwixt the nice partitions of the grass ;  
The well-united sods so closely lay ; 70  
And all around the shades defended it from day :  
For sycamores with eglantine were spread,  
A hedge about the sides, a covering over-head.



And so the fragrant brier was wove between,  
The sycamore and flowers were mix'd with green, 75  
That nature seem'd to vary the delight,  
And satisfy'd at once the smell and sight.  
The master workman of the bower was known  
Through fairy-lands, and built for Oberon ;  
Who twining leaves with such proportion drew, 80  
They rose by measure, and by rule they grew ;  
No mortal tongue can half the beauty tell :  
For none but hands divine could work so well.  
Both roof and sides were like a parlour made,  
A soft recess, and a cool summer shade ; 85  
The hedge was set so thick, no foreign eye  
The persons plac'd within it could espy :  
But all that pass'd without, with ease was seen,  
As if nor fence nor tree was plac'd between.  
'Twas border'd with a field ; and some was plain 90  
With grass, and some was sow'd with rising grain.  
That (now the dew with spangles deck'd the ground)  
A sweeter spot of earth was never found.  
I look'd and look'd, and still with new delight ;  
Such joy my soul, such pleasures fill'd my sight : 95  
And the fresh eglantine exhal'd a breath,  
Whose odours were of power to raise from death.  
Nor sullen discontent, nor anxious care,  
Ev'n though brought thither, could inhabit there :  
But thence they fled as from their mortal foe ; 100  
For this sweet place could only pleasure know.

Thus as I mus'd, I cast aside my eye,  
And saw a medlar-tree was planted nigh.  
The spreading branches made a goodly show,  
And full of opening blooms was every bough : 105  
A goldfinch there I saw with gawdy pride  
Of painted plumes, that hopp'd from side to side,  
Still pecking as she pass'd ; and still she drew  
The sweets from every flower, and suck'd the dew :  
Suffic'd at length, she warbled in her throat, 110  
And tun'd her voice to many a merry note,  
But indistinct, and neither sweet nor clear,  
Yet such as sooth'd my soul, and pleas'd my ear.



Her short performance was no sooner try'd,  
 When she I sought, the nightingale, reply'd : 115  
 So sweet, so shrill, so variously she sung,  
 That the grove echoed, and the valleys rung :  
 And I so ravish'd with her heavenly note,  
 I stood entranc'd, and had no room for thought.  
 But, all o'erpower'd with ecstasy of bliss, 120  
 Was in a pleasing dream of paradise ;  
 At length I wak'd, and looking round the bower,  
 Search'd every tree, and pry'd on every flower,  
 If any where by chance I might espy,  
 The rural poet of the melody : 125  
 For still methought she sung not far away :  
 At last I found her on a laurel spray.  
 Close by my side she sat, and fair in sight,  
 Full in a line against her opposite ;  
 Where stood with eglantine the laurel twin'd ; 130  
 And both their native sweets were well conjoin'd.

On the green bank I sat, and listen'd long  
 (Sitting was more convenient for the song) :  
 Nor till her lay was ended could I move,  
 But wish'd to dwell for ever in the grove. 135  
 Only methought the time too swiftly pass'd,  
 And every note, I fear'd, would be the last.  
 My sight and smell, and hearing, were employ'd,  
 And all three senses in full gust enjoy'd.  
 And what alone did all the rest surpass, 140  
 The sweet possession of the fairy place ;  
 Single, and conscious to myself alone  
 Of pleasures to th' excluded world unknown :  
 Pleasures which no where else were to be found,  
 And all Elysium in a spot of ground. 145

Thus while I sat intent to see and hear,  
 And drew perfumes of more than vital air,  
 All suddenly I heard th' approaching sound  
 Of vocal music, on th' enchanted ground :  
 An host of saints it seem'd, so full the quire ; 150  
 As if the bless'd above did all conspire  
 To join their voices, and neglect the lyre.



At length there issued from the grove behind

A fair assembly of the female kind :

A train less fair, as ancient fathers tell,

155

Seduc'd the sons of heaven to rebel.

I pass their form, and every charming grace,

Less than an angel would their worth debase :

But their attire, like liveries of a kind

All rich and rare, is fresh within my mind.

160

In velvet white as snow the troop was gown'd,

The seams with sparkling emeralds set around :

Their hoods and sleeves the same ; and purled o'er

With diamonds, pearls, and all the shining store

Of eastern pomp : their long descending train,

165

With rubies edg'd, and sapphires, swept the plain :

High on their heads, with jewels richly set,

Each lady wore a radiant coronet.

Beneath the circles, all the quire was grac'd

With chaplets green on their fair foreheads plac'd. 170

Of laurel some, of woodbine many more ;

And wreaths of Agnus castus others bore :

These last, who with those virgin crowns were dress'd,

Appear'd in higher honour than the rest.

They danc'd around : but in the midst was seen 175

A lady of a more majestic mien ;

By stature and by beauty mark'd their sovereign queen.

She in the midst began with sober grace ;

Her servants' eyes were fix'd upon her face,

And, as she mov'd or turn'd, her motions view'd, 180

Her measures kept, and step by step pursu'd.

Methought she trod the ground with greater grace,

With more of godhead shining in her face ;

And as in beauty she surpass'd the quire,

So, nobler than the rest, was her attire.

185

A crown of ruddy gold inclos'd her brow,

Plain without pomp, and rich without a show :

A branch of Agnus castus in her hand

She bore aloft (her sceptre of command) :

Admir'd, ador'd by all the circling crowd,

190

For wheresoe'er she turn'd her face, they bow'd :



And as she danc'd, a roundelay she sung,  
In honour of the laurel, ever young :  
She rais'd her voice on high, and sung so clear,  
The fawns came scudding from the groves to hear :  
And all the bending forest lent an ear. 196  
At every close she made, th' attending throng  
Reply'd, and bore the burden of the song :  
So just, so small, yet in so sweet a note,  
It seem'd the music melted in the throat. 200

Thus dancing on, and singing as they danc'd,  
They to the middle of the mead advanc'd,  
Till round my arbour a new ring they made,  
And footed it about the secret shade.  
O'erjoy'd to see the jolly troop so near, 205  
But somewhat aw'd, I shook with holy fear ;  
Yet not so much, but that I noted well  
Who did the most in song or dance excel.

Not long I had observ'd, when from afar  
I heard a sudden symphony of war ; 210  
The neighing couriers, and the soldiers cry,  
And sounding trumps that seem'd to tear the sky :  
I saw, soon after this, behind the grove  
From whence the ladies did in order move,  
Come issuing out in arms a warrior train, 215  
That like a deluge pour'd upon the plain :  
On barbed steeds they rode in proud array,  
Thick as the college of the bees in May,  
When swarming o'er the dusky fields they fly,  
New to the flowers, and intercept the sky. 220  
So fierce they drove, their couriers were so fleet,  
That the turf trembled underneath their feet.

To tell their costly furniture were long,  
The summer's day would end before the song :  
To purchase but the tenth of all their store, 225  
Would make the mighty Persian monarch poor.  
Yet what I can, I will ; before the rest  
The trumpets issued in white mantles dress'd :  
A numerous troop, and all their heads around  
With chaplets green of cerrial oak were crown'd, 230  
And at each trumpet was a banner bound ;



Which waving in the wind display'd at large  
Their master's coat of arms, and knightly charge,  
Broad were the banners, and of snowy hue,  
A purer web the silk-worm never drew. 235

The chief about their necks the scutcheons wore,  
With orient pearls and jewels powder'd o'er :  
Broad were their collars too, and every one  
Was set about with many a costly stone.

Next these of kings at arms a goodly train 240

In proud array came prancing o'er the plain :  
Their cloaks were cloth of silver mix'd with gold,  
And garlands green around their temples roll'd :  
Rich crowns were on their royal scutcheons plac'd,  
With sapphires, diamonds, and with rubies grac'd :  
And as the trumpets their appearance made, 246

So these in habits were alike array'd ;

But with a pace more sober, and more slow ;

And twenty, rank in rank, they rode a row.

The pursuivants came next, in number more ; 250

And like the heralds each his scutcheon bore :

Clad in white velvet all their troop they led,

With each an oaken chaplet on his head.

Nine royal knights in equal rank succeed,  
Each warrior mounted on a fiery steed ; 255

In golden armour glories to behold ;

The rivets of their arms were nail'd with gold.

Their furcoats of white ermin fur were made,

With cloth of gold between, that cast a glittering  
shade :

The trappings of their steeds were of the same ; 260

The golden fringe ev'n set the ground on flame,

And drew a precious trail : a crown divine

Of laurel did about their temples twine.

Three henchmen were for every knight assign'd,  
All in rich livery clad, and of a kind : 265

White velvet, but unshorn, for cloaks they wore,

And each within his hand a truncheon bore :

The foremost held a helm of rare device ;

A prince's ransom would not pay the price.



The second bore the buckler of his knight, 270  
 The third of cornel-wood a spear upright,  
 Headed with piercing steel, and polish'd bright.  
 Like to their lords their equipage was seen,  
 And all their foreheads crown'd with garlands green.  
 And after these came, arm'd with spear and shield,  
 An host so great as cover'd all the field, 276  
 And all their foreheads, like the knights before,  
 With laurels ever green were shaded o'er,  
 Or oak, or other leaves of lasting kind,  
 Tenacious of the stem, and firm against the wind. 280  
 Some in their hands, beside the lance and shield,  
 The bows of woodbine or of hawthorn held,  
 Or branches for their mystic emblems took,  
 Of palm, of laurel, or of cerrial oak.  
 Thus marching to the trumpet's lofty sound, 285  
 Drawn in two lines adverse they wheel'd around,  
 And in the middle meadow took their ground.  
 Among themselves the tourney they divide,  
 In equal squadrons rang'd on either side.  
 Then turn'd their horses heads, and man to man, 290  
 And steed to steed oppos'd, the justs began.  
 They lightly set their lances in the rest,  
 And, at the sign, against each other press'd :  
 They met. I sitting at my ease beheld  
 The mix'd events, and fortunes of the field. 295  
 Some broke their spears, some tumbled horse and man,  
 And round the field the lighten'd courfers ran.  
 An hour or more, like tides, in equal sway  
 They rush'd, and won by turns, and lost the day :  
 At length the nine (who still together held) 300  
 Their fainting foes to shameful flight compell'd,  
 And with resolute force o'er-ran the field.  
 Thus, to their fame, when finish'd was the fight,  
 The victors from their lofty steeds alight :  
 Like them, dismounted, all the warlike train, 305  
 And two by two proceeded o'er the plain :  
 Till to the fair assembly they advanc'd,  
 Who near the secret arbour sung and danc'd.



The ladies left their measures at the fight,  
To meet the chiefs returning from the fight, 310  
And each with open arms embrac'd her chosen knight.  
Amid the plain a spreading laurel stood,  
The grace and ornament of all the wood :  
That pleasing shade they sought, a soft retreat  
From sudden April showers, a shelter from the heat :  
Her leafy arms with such extent were spread, 316  
So near the clouds was her aspiring head,  
That hosts of birds, that wing the liquid air,  
Perch'd in the boughs, had nightly lodging there :  
And flocks of sheep beneath the shade from far 320  
Might hear the rattling hail, and wint'ry war ;  
From heaven's inclemency here found retreat,  
Enjoy'd the cool, and shunn'd the scorching heat :  
A hundred knights might there at ease abide ;  
And every knight a lady by his side : 325  
The trunk itself such odours did bequeath,  
That a Moluccan breeze to these was common breath.  
The lords and ladies here, approaching, paid  
Their homage, with a low obeisance made :  
And seem'd to venerate the sacred shade. 330  
These rites perform'd, their pleasures they pursue,  
With song of love, and mix with pleasures new ;  
Around the holy tree their dance they frame,  
And every champion leads his chosen dame.

I cast my sight upon the farther field, 335  
And a fresh object of delight beheld :  
For from the region of the west I heard  
New music sound, and a new troop appear'd ;  
Of knights, and ladies mix'd a jolly band,  
But all on foot they march'd, and hand in hand. 340

The ladies dress'd in rich fymars were seen  
Of Florence satin, flower'd with white and green,  
And for a shade betwixt the bloomy gridelin.  
The borders of their petticoats below  
Were guarded thick with rubies on a row ; 345  
And every damsel wore upon her head  
Of flowers a garland blended white and red.



Attir'd in mantles all the knights were seen,  
 That gratify'd the view with cheerful green :  
 Their chaplets of their ladies colours were, 350  
 Compos'd of white and red, to shade their shining hair.  
 Before the merry troop the minstrels play'd ;  
 All in their master's liveries were array'd,  
 And clad in green, and on their temples wore  
 The chaplets white and red their ladies bore. 355  
 Their instruments were various in their kind,  
 Some for the bow, and some for breathing wind :  
 The sawtry, pipe, and hautboy's noisy band, [hand.  
 And the soft lute trembling beneath the touching  
 A tuft of daisies on a flowery lay 360  
 They saw, and thitherward they bent their way ;  
 To this both knights and dames their homage made,  
 And due obeisance to the daisy paid.  
 And then the band of flutes began to play,  
 To which a lady sung a virelay : 365  
 And still at every close she would repeat  
 The burden of the song, " The daisy is so sweet."  
 The daisy is so sweet, when she begun,  
 The troop of knights and dames continued on.  
 The concert and the voice so charm'd my ear, 370  
 And sooth'd my soul, that it was heaven to hear.  
 But soon their pleasure pass'd : at noon of day,  
 The sun with sultry beams began to play :  
 Not Sirius shoots a fiercer flame from high,  
 When with his poisonous breath he blasts the sky : 375  
 Then droop'd the fading flowers (their beauty fled)  
 And clos'd their sickly eyes, and hung the head ;  
 And, rivell'd up with heat, lay dying in their bed.  
 The ladies gasp'd, and scarcely could respire ;  
 The breath they drew, no longer air, but fire ; 380  
 The fainty knights were scorcht ; and knew not  
 To run for shelter, for no shade was near ; [where  
 And after this the gathering clouds amain  
 Pour'd down a storm of rattling hail and rain :  
 And lightning flash'd betwixt : the field and flowers,  
 Burnt up before, were buried in the showers. 386



The ladies and the knights, no shelter nigh,  
Bare to the weather and the wint'ry sky,  
Were dropping wet, disconsolate, and wan,  
And through their thin array receiv'd the rain; 390  
While those in white protected by the tree  
Saw pass in vain th' assault, and stood from danger free.  
But as compassion mov'd their gentle minds,  
When ceas'd the storm, and silent were the winds,  
Displeas'd at what, not suffering, they had seen, 395  
They went to cheer the faction of the green:  
The queen in white array, before her band,  
Saluting, took her rival by the hand;  
So did the knights and dames, with courtly grace,  
And with behaviour sweet their foes embrace, 400  
Then thus the queen with laurel on her brow,  
Fair sister, I have suffer'd in your woe;  
Nor shall be wanting aught within my power  
For your relief in my refreshing bower.  
That other answer'd with a lowly look, 405  
And soon the gracious invitation took:  
For ill at ease both she and all her train  
The scorching sun had borne, and beating rain.  
Like courtesy was us'd by all in white,  
Each dame a dame receiv'd, and every knight a knight.  
The laurel champions with their swords invade 411  
The neighbouring forests, where the jousts were made,  
And ferewood from the rotten hedges took,  
And seeds of latent fire from flints provoke:  
A cheerful blaze arose, and by the fire 415  
They warm'd their frozen feet, and dry'd their wet at-  
Refresh'd with heat, the ladies sought around [tire.  
For virtuous herbs, which, gather'd from the ground,  
They squeez'd the juice, and cooling ointment made,  
Which on their sun-burnt cheeks, and their chap't  
skins they laid: 420  
Then sought green fallads, which they bade them eat,  
A sovereign remedy for inward heat.

The lady of the leaf ordain'd a feast,  
And made the lady of the flower her guest:



When lo, a bower ascended on the plain, 425  
 With sudden seats ordain'd, and large for either train.  
 This bower was near my pleasant harbour plac'd,  
 That I could hear and see whatever pass'd :  
 The ladies sat with each a knight between,  
 Distinguish'd by their colours, white and green ; 430  
 'The vanquish'd party with the victors join'd,  
 Nor wanted sweet discourse, the banquet of the mind.  
 Mean time the minstrels play'd on either side,  
 Vain of their art, and for the mastery vied :  
 The sweet contention lasted for an hour, 435  
 And reach'd my secret harbour from the bower.

The sun was set ; and Vesper, to supply  
 His absent beams had lighted up the sky :  
 When Philomel officious all the day  
 To sing the service of th' ensuing May, 440  
 Fled from her laurel shade, and wing'd her flight  
 Directly to the queen array'd in white :

And hopping sat familiar on her hand,  
 A new musician, and increas'd the band,  
 The goldfinch, who, to shun the scalding heat, 445  
 Had chang'd the medlar for a safer seat,  
 And hid in bushes 'scap'd the bitter shower,  
 Now perch'd upon the lady of the flower ;  
 And either songster holding out their throats,  
 And folding up their wings, renew'd their notes : 450  
 As if all day, preluding to the fight,  
 They only had rehears'd, to sing by night :  
 The banquet ended, and the battle done,  
 They danc'd by star-light and the friendly moon :  
 And when they were to part, the laureat queen 455  
 Supply'd with steeds the lady of the green,  
 Her and her train conducting on the way,  
 The moon to follow, and avoid the day.

This when I saw, inquisitive to know  
 The secret moral of the mystic shew, 460  
 I started from my shade, in hopes to find  
 Some nymph to satisfy my longing mind :  
 And as my fair adventure fell, I found  
 A lady all in white, with laurel crown'd,



Who clos'd the rear, and softly pac'd along, 465  
Repeating to herself the former song.

With due respect my body I inclin'd,  
As to some being of superior kind,  
And made my court according to the day,  
Wishing her queen and her a happy May. 470

Great thanks, my daughter, with a gracious bow,  
She said; and I, who much desir'd to know  
Of whence she was, yet fearful how to break  
My mind, adventur'd humbly thus to speak :  
Madam, might I presume and not offend, 475

So may the stars and shining moon attend  
Your nightly sports, as you vouchsafe to tell  
What nymphs they were who mortal forms excel,  
And what the knights who fought in list'd fields so well.  
To this the dame reply'd : Fair daughter, know, 480  
That what you saw was all a fairy show :

And all those airy shapes you now behold,  
Were human bodies once, and cloth'd with earthly  
Our souls, not yet prepar'd for upper light, [mould,  
Till doomsday wander in the shades of night ; 485  
This only holiday of all the year,

We priviledg'd in sunshine may appear :  
With songs and dance we celebrate the day,  
And with due honours usher in the May.  
At other times we reign by night alone, 490

And posting through the skies pursue the moon :  
But when the morn arises, none are found ;  
For cruel Demogorgon walks the round,  
And if he finds a fairy lag in light,  
He drives the wretch before, and lashes into night. 495

All courteous are by kind ; and ever proud  
With friendly offices to help the good.  
In every land we have a larger space  
Than what is known to you of mortal race :  
Where we with green adorn our fairy bowers, 500  
And ev'n this grove, unseen before, is ours.  
Know farther ; every lady cloth'd in white,  
And, crown'd with oak and laurel every knight,



Are servants to the leaf, by liveries known  
Of innocence ; and I myself am one.

505

Saw you not her so graceful to behold  
In white attire, and crown'd with radiant gold ?  
The sovereign lady of our land is she,  
Diana call'd, the queen of chastity :

And, for the spotless name of maid she bears, 510

That Agnus castus in her hand appears ;  
And all her train, with leafy chaplets crown'd,  
Were for unblam'd virginity renown'd ;

But those the chief and highest in command  
Who bear those holy branches in their hand : 515

The knights adorn'd with laurel crowns are they,  
Whom death nor danger never could dismay,  
Victorious names, who made the world obey :

Who, while they liv'd, in deeds of arms excell'd,  
And after death for deities were held. 520

But those, who wear the woodbine on their brow,  
Were knights of love, who never broke their vow ;  
Firm to their plighted faith, and ever free  
From fears, and fickle chance, and jealousy.

The lords and ladies, who the woodbine bear, 525  
As true as Tristram and Isotta were.

But what are those, said I, th' unconquer'd nine,  
Who crown'd with laurel-wreaths in golden armour  
shine ?

And who the knights in green, and what the train  
Of ladies dress'd with daisies on the plain ? 530

Why both the bands in worship disagree,  
And some adore the flower, and some the tree ?

Just is your suit, fair daughter, said the dame :  
Those laurel'd chiefs were men of mighty fame ;  
Nine worthies were they call'd of different rites, 535

Three Jews, three Pagans, and three Christian knights.  
These, as you see, ride foremost in the field,

As they the foremost rank of honour held,  
And all in deeds of chivalry excell'd :

Their temples wreath'd with leaves, that still renew ;  
For deathless laurel is the victor's due : 540



Who bear the bows were knights in Arthur's reign,  
 Twelve they, and twelve the peers of Charlemain :  
 For bows the strength of brawny arms imply,  
 Emblems of valour and of victory. 545  
 Behold an order yet of newer date,  
 Doubling their number, equal in their state ;  
 Our England's ornament, the crown's defence,  
 In battle brave, protectors of their prince :  
 Unchang'd by fortune, to their sovereign true, 550  
 For which their manly legs are bound with blue.  
 These of the garter call'd, of faith unstain'd,  
 In fighting fields the laurel have obtain'd,  
 And well repaid the honours which they gain'd.  
 The laurel wreaths were first by Cæsar worn, 555  
 And still they Cæsar's successors adorn :  
 One leaf of this is immortality,  
 And more of worth than all the world can buy.  
 One doubt remains, said I, the dames in green,  
 What were their qualities, and who their queen ? 560  
 Flora commands, said she, those nymphs and knights,  
 Who liv'd in slothful ease and loose delights ;  
 Who never acts of honour durst pursue,  
 The men inglorious knights, the ladies all untrue :  
 Who, nurs'd in idleness, and train'd in courts, 565  
 Pass'd all their precious hours in plays and sports,  
 Till death behind came stalking on, unseen,  
 And wither'd (like the storm) the freshness of their  
 These, and their mates, enjoy their present hour, (green.  
 And therefore pay their homage to the flower. 570  
 But knights in knightly deeds should persevere,  
 And still continue what at first they were ;  
 Continue, and proceed in honour's fair career.  
 No room for cowardice, or dull delay ;  
 From good to better they should urge their way. 575  
 For this with golden spurs the chiefs are grac'd,  
 With pointed rowels arm'd to mend their haste ;  
 For this with lasting leaves their brows are bound ;  
 For laurel is the sign of labour crown'd,  
 Which bears the bitter blast, nor shaken falls to ground ;



From winter winds it suffers no decay, 581  
 For ever fresh and fair, and every month is May.  
 Ev'n when the vital sap retreats below,  
 Ev'n when the hoary head is hid in snow ;  
 The life is in the leaf, and still between 585  
 The fits of falling snow appears the streaky green,  
 Not so the flower, which lasts for little space,  
 A short-liv'd good, and an uncertain grace ;  
 This way and that the feeble stem is driven,  
 Weak to sustain the storms and injuries of heaven. 590  
 Propp'd by the spring, it lifts aloft the head,  
 But of a sickly beauty, soon to shed ;  
 In summer living, and in winter dead.  
 For things of tenderkind, for pleasure made,  
 Shoot up with swift increase, and sudden are decay'd,  
 With humble words, the wisest I could frame, 596  
 And proffer'd service, I repaid the dame ;  
 That, of her grace, she gave her maid to know  
 The secret meaning of this moral show.  
 And she, to prove what profit I had made 600  
 Of mystic truth, in fables first convey'd,  
 Demanded till the next returning May,  
 Whether the leaf or flower I would obey ?  
 I chose the leaf ; she smil'd with sober cheer,  
 And wish'd me fair adventure for the year, 605  
 And gave me charms and sigils, for defence  
 Against ill tongues that scandal innocence :  
 But I, said she, my fellows must pursue,  
 Already past the plain, and out of view.  
 We parted thus ; I homeward sped my way, 610  
 Bewilder'd in the wood till dawn of day :  
 And met the merry crew who danc'd about the May.  
 Then late refresh'd with sleep, I rose to write  
 The visionary vigils of the night :  
 Blush, as thou may'st, my little book, with shame, 615  
 Nor hope with homely verse to purchase fame ;  
 For such my Maker chose : and so design'd  
 Thy simple style to suit thy lowly kind. 618



# THE WIFE OF BATH,

## HER TALE.

**I**N days of old, when Arthur fill'd the throne,  
Whose acts and fame to foreign lands were blown ;  
The king of elfs and little fairy queen  
Gambol'd on heaths and danc'd on every green ;  
And where the jolly troop had led the round, 5  
The grafs unbidden rose, and mark'd the ground :  
Nor darkling did they glance, the silver light  
Of Phœbe serv'd to guide their steps aright,  
And, with their tripping pleas'd prolong the night.  
Her beams they follow'd, where at full she play'd 10  
Nor longer than she shed her horns they stay'd,  
From thence with airy flight to foreign lands convey'd.  
Above the rest, our Britain held they dear,  
More solemnly they kept their sabbaths here,  
And made more spacious rings and revell'd half the year.  
I speak of ancient times, for now the swain 16  
Returning late may pass the woods in vain,  
And never hope to see the nightly train :  
In vain the dairy now with mint is dress'd,  
The dairy-maid expects no fairy guest, 20  
To skim the bowls, and after pay the feast.  
She sighs, and shakes her empty shoes in vain,  
No silver penny to reward her pain :  
For priests, with prayers and other goodly geer,  
Have made the merry goblins disappear ; 25  
And where they play'd their merry pranks before,  
Have sprinkled holy water on the floor :  
And friars that through the wealthy regions run,  
Thick as the motes that twinkle in the sun,  
Resort to farmers rich, and bless their halls, 30  
And exercise the beds and cross the walls :  
This makes the fairy quires forsake the place,  
When once 'tis hallow'd with the rites of grace :  
But in the walks where wicked elves have been,  
The learning of the parish now is seen, 35  
The midnight parson posting o'er the green,



With gown tuck'd up, to wakes for Sunday next,  
 With humming ale encouraging his text;  
 Nor wants the holy leer to country girl betwixt.  
 From fiends and imps he sets the village free, 40  
 There haunts not any incubus but he.

The maids and women need no danger fear  
 To walk by night, and sanctity so near:  
 For by some haycock, or some shady thorn,  
 He bids his beads both even song and morn. 45

It so befel in this king Arthur's reign,  
 A lusty knight was pricking o'er the plain;  
 A bachelor he was, and of the courtly train.  
 It happen'd, as he rode, a damsel gay  
 In russet robes to market took her way: 50  
 Soon on the girl he cast an amorous eye,  
 So straight she walk'd and on her pasterns high;  
 If seeing her behind he lik'd her pace,  
 Now turning short, he better likes her face.  
 He lights in haste, and, full of youthful fire, 55  
 By force accomplish'd his obscene desire:  
 This done, away he rode, not unesp'y'd,  
 For swarming at his back the country cry'd:  
 And once in view they never lost the sight,  
 But seiz'd, and pinion'd, brought to court the knight.

Then courts of kings were held in high renown, 61  
 Ere made the common brothels of the town:  
 There, virgins honourable vows receiv'd,  
 But chaste as maids in monasteries liv'd;  
 The king himself, to nuptial ties a slave, 65  
 No bad examples to his poets gave:  
 And they, not bad, but in a vicious age,  
 Had not, to please the prince debauch'd the stage.

Now, what should Arthur do? he lov'd the knight,  
 But sovereign monarchs are the source of right: 70  
 Mov'd by the damsel's tears and common cry,  
 He doom'd the brutal ravisher to die.  
 But fair Geneura rose in his defence,  
 And pray'd so hard for mercy from the prince,  
 That to his queen the king th' offender gave, 75  
 And left it in her power to kill or save:



This gracious act the ladies all approve,  
Who thought it much a man should die for love;  
And with their mistress join'd in close debate  
(Covering their kindness with dissembled hate), 80  
If not to free him, to prolong his fate.

At last agreed they call'd him by consent  
Before the queen and female parliament.  
And the fair speaker rising from the chair,  
Did thus the judgment of the house declare. 85

Sir knight, though I have ask'd thy life, yet still  
Thy destiny depends upon my will:  
Nor hast thou other surety than the grace  
Not due to thee from our offended race,  
But as our kind is of a softer mold, 90  
And cannot blood without a sigh behold,  
I grant thee life; reserving still the power  
To take the forfeit when I see my hour:  
Unless thy answer to my next demand  
Shall set thee free from our avenging hand. 95

The question, whose solution I require,  
Is, what the sex of women most desire?  
In this dispute thy judges are at strife;  
Beware: for on thy wit depends thy life.  
Yet (lest, surpris'd, unknowing what to say, 100  
Thou damn thyself) we give thee farther day:  
A year is thine to wander at thy will;  
And learn from others, if thou want'st the skill.  
But, not to hold our proffer turn'd in scorn,  
Good sureties will we have for thy return; 105  
That at the time prefix'd thou shalt obey,  
And at thy pledge's peril keep thy day.

Woe was the knight at this severe command;  
But well he knew 'twas bootless to withstand:  
The terms accepted as the fair ordain, 110  
He put in bail for his return again,  
And promis'd answer at the day assign'd,  
The best, with heaven's assistance, he could find.

His leave thus taken, on his way he went  
With heavy heart and full of discontent, 115  
Misdoubting much, and fearful of th' event,



'Twas hard the truth of such a point to find,  
As was not yet agreed among the kind.  
'Thus on he went; still anxious more and more,  
Ask'd all he met, and knock'd at every door; 120  
Inquir'd of men; but made his chief request  
To learn from women what they lov'd the best.  
They answer'd each according to her mind  
To please herself, not all the female kind.  
One was for wealth, another was for place: 125  
Crones, old and ugly, wish'd a better face.  
The widow's wish was oftentimes to wed;  
The wanton maids were all for sport a-bed.  
Some said the sex were pleas'd with handsome lies,  
And some gross flattery lov'd without disguise: 130  
Truth is, says one, he seldom fails to win  
Who flatters well; for that's our darling sin;  
But long attendance, and a duteous mind,  
Will work ev'n with the wisest of the kind.  
One thought the sex's prime felicity 135  
Was from the bonds of wedlock to be free:  
Their pleasures, hours, and actions, all their own,  
And uncontrol'd to give account to none.  
Some wish a husband fool; but such are curst,  
For fools perverse of husbands are the worst: 140  
All women would be counted chaste and wise,  
Nor should our spouses see but with our eyes;  
For fools will prate; and though they want the wit  
To find close faults, yet open blots will hit:  
Though better for their ease to hold their tongue, 145  
For woman kind was never in the wrong.  
So noise ensues, and quarrels last for life;  
The wife abhors the fool, the fool the wife.  
And some men say that great delight have we,  
To be for truth extoll'd and secrecy: 150  
And constant in one purpose still to dwell;  
And not our husband's counsels to reveal.  
But that's a fable: for our sex is frail,  
Inventing, rather than not tell a tale.  
Like leaky sieves no secrets we can hold: 155  
Witness the famous tale that Ovid told.



Midas the king, as in his book appears,  
By Phœbus was endow'd with ass's ears,  
Which under his long locks he well conceal'd,  
(As monarch's vices must not be reveal'd) 160  
For fear the people have them in the wind,  
Who long ago were neither dumb nor blind :  
Nor apt to think from heaven their title springs,  
Since Jove and Mars left off begetting kings.  
This Midas knew : and durst communicate 165  
To none but to his wife his ears of state :  
One must be trusted, and he thought her fit,  
As passing prudent, and a parlous wit.  
To this sagacious confessor he went,  
And told her what a gift the gods had sent : 170  
But told it under matrimonial seal,  
With strict injunction never to reveal.  
The secret heard, she plighted him her troth,  
(And sacred sure is every woman's oath)  
The royal malady should rest unknown, 175  
Both for her husband's honour and her own ;  
But ne'ertheless she pin'd with discontent ;  
The counsel rumbled till it found a vent.  
The thing she knew she was oblig'd to hide ;  
By interest and by oath the wife was ty'd ; 180  
But if she told it not, the woman dy'd.  
Loath to betray a husband and a prince,  
But she must burst, or blab ; and no pretence  
Of honour ty'd her tongue from self-defence.  
A marshy ground commodiously was near, 185  
Thither she ran, and held her breath for fear,  
Lest if a word she spoke of any thing,  
That word might be the secret of the king.  
Thus full of counsel to the fen she went,  
Grip'd all the way, and longing for a vent ; 190  
Arriv'd, by pure necessity compell'd,  
On her majestic marrow-bones she kneel'd :  
Then to the water's brink she laid her head,  
And, as a bittour bumps within a reed,  
To thee alone, O lake, she said, I tell, 195  
(And, as thy queen, command thee to conceal :)



Beneath his locks the king my husband wears  
A goodly royal pair of afs's ears.

Now I have eas'd my bosom of the pain,  
Till the next longing fit return again.

200

Thus, through a woman was the secret known;  
Tell us, and in effect you tell the town.

But to my tale: The knight with heavy cheer,  
Wandering in vain, had now consum'd the year:

One day was only left to solve the doubt,

205

Yet knew no more than when he first set out.

But home he must, and, as th' award had been,

Yield up his body captive to the queen.

In this despairing state he hapt to ride,

As fortune led him, by a forest side:

210

Lonely the vale, and full of horror stood,

Brown with the shade of a religious wood:

When full before him at the noon of night,

(The moon was up, and shot a gleamy light)

He saw a quire of ladies in a round,

215

That featly footing seem'd to skim the ground:

Thus dancing hand in hand, so light they were,

He knew not where they trod, on earth or air.

At speed he drove, and came a sudden guest,

In hope where many women were, at least,

220

Some one by chance might answer his request.

But faster than his horse the ladies flew,

And in a trice were vanish'd out of view.

One only hag remain'd; but fouler far

Than grandame apes in Indian forests are;

225

Against a wither'd oak she lean'd her weight,

Propp'd on her trusty staff, not half upright,

And dropp'd an awkward court'ly to the knight.

Then said, what makes you, Sir, so late abroad

Without a guide, and this no beaten road?

230

Or want you aught that here you hope to find,

Or travel for some trouble in your mind?

The last I guess; and if I read aright,

Those of our sex are bound to serve a knight;

Perhaps good counsel may your grief assuage,

235

Then tell your pain; for wisdom is in age.









*Drawn by R. Corbould, Engraved by W. Haskins.*

Flight me thy Faith, quoth she that what I ask,  
Thy danger over, and perform'd thy task,  
That, thou shalt give for hire of thy demand;  
Here take thy oath, and seal it on my hand.

*Vide Misc. of Bath's Tale Vol. III. Page 283. line 247.*

DRYDEN'S POEMS.

*Printed for C. Cooke. Dec. 8. 1798.*



To this the knight: Good mother, would you know  
The secret cause and spring of all my woe?  
My life must with to-morrow's light expire,  
Unless I tell what women most desire.

240

Now could you help me at this hard essay,  
Or for your inborn goodness, or for pay;  
Yours is my life, redeem'd by your advice,  
Ask what you please, and I will pay the price:  
The proudest kerchief of the court shall rest  
Well satisfy'd of what they love the best.

245

Plight me thy faith, quoth she, that what I ask,  
Thy danger over, and perform'd thy task,  
That thou shalt give for hire of thy demand;  
Here take thy oath, and seal it on my hand;  
I warrant thee, on peril of my life,

250

Thy words shall please both widow, maid, and wife.

More words there needed not to move the knight,  
To take her offer, and his truth to plight.

With that she spread a mantle on the ground,

255

And, first inquiring whither he was bound,

Bade him not fear, though long and rough the way,

At court he should arrive e'er break of day;

His horse should find the way without a guide.

She said: with fury they began to ride,

260

He on the midst, the beldam at his side.

The horse, what devil drove I cannot tell,

But only this, they sped their journey well:

And all the way the crone inform'd the knight,

How he should answer the demand aright.

265

To court they came; the news was quickly spread  
Of his returning to redeem his head.

The female senate was assembled soon

With all the mob of women of the town:

The queen sat lord chief justice of the hall,

270

And bade the crier cite the criminal.

The knight appear'd; and silence they proclaim:

Then first the culprit answer'd to his name:

And, after forms of law, was last requir'd

To name the thing that women most desir'd.

275



Th' offender, taught his lesson by the way,  
 And by his counsel order'd what to say,  
 Thus bold began: My lady liege, said he,  
 What all your sex desire is sovereignty.  
 The wife affects her husband to command; 280  
 All must be her's both money, house, and land.  
 The maids are mistresses ev'n in their name;  
 And of their servants full dominion claim.

This, at the peril of my head, I say,  
 A blunt plain truth, the sex aspires to sway, 285  
 You to rule all, while we, like slaves, obey.  
 There was not one, or widow, maid, or wife,  
 But said the knight had well deserv'd his life.  
 Ev'n fair Geneura, with a blush, confess'd  
 The man had found what women love the best. 290

Up starts the beldam, who was there unseen:  
 And, reverence made, accosted thus the queen.  
 My liege, said she, before the court arise,  
 May I, poor wretch, find favour in your eyes,  
 To grant my just request: 'twas I who taught 295  
 The knight this answer, and inspir'd his thought;  
 None but a woman could a man direct  
 To tell us women what we most affect.  
 But first I swore him on his knightly troth,  
 (And here demand performance of his oath) 300  
 To grant the boon that next I should desire;  
 He gave his faith, and I expect my hire:  
 My promise is fulfill'd: I sav'd his life,  
 And claim his debt, to take me for his wife.  
 The knight was ask'd, nor could his oath deny, 305  
 But hop'd they would not force him to comply.  
 The women, who would rather wrest the laws,  
 Than let a sister-plaintiff lose the cause;  
 (As judges on the bench more gracious are,  
 And more attent to brothers of the bar) 310  
 Cry'd one and all, the suppliant should have right,  
 And to the grandame hag adjudg'd the knight.

In vain he sigh'd, and oft with tears desir'd  
 Some reasonable suit might be requir'd.



But still the crone was constant to her note ; 315  
The more he spoke, the more she stretch'd her throat.  
In vain he proffer'd all his goods, to save  
His body destin'd to that living grave.  
The liquorish hag rejects the pelf with scorn ;  
And nothing but the man would serve her turn. 320  
Not all the wealth of Eastern kings, said she,  
Have power to part my plighted love and me,  
And, old and ugly as I am, and poor,  
Yet never will I break the faith I swore ;  
For mine thou art by promise, during life, 325  
And I thy loving and obedient wife.

My love ! nay, rather my damnation, thou,  
Said he : nor am I bound to keep my vow :  
The fiend thy fire hath set thee from below,  
Else how couldst thou my secret sorrows know ? 330  
Avaunt, old witch, for I renounce thy bed :  
The queen may take the forfeit of my head,  
Ere any of my race so foul a crone shall wed.  
Both heard, the judge pronounc'd against the knight ;  
So was he marry'd in his own despite ; 335  
And all day after hid him as an owl,  
Not able to sustain a fight so foul.  
Perhaps the reader thinks I do him wrong,  
To pass the marriage feast and nuptial song :  
Mirth there was none, the man was *à-la-mort*, 340  
And little courage had to make his court.  
To bed they went, the bridegroom and the bride :  
Was never such an ill-pair'd couple ty'd :  
Restless he toils'd and tumbled to and fro,  
And roll'd and wriggled further off for woe. 345  
The good old wife lay smiling by his side,  
And caught him in her quivering arms, and cry'd  
When you my ravish'd predecessor saw,  
You were not then become this man of straw ;  
Had you been such, you might have 'scap'd the law. 350  
Is this the custom of king Arthur's court ?  
Are all round-table knights of such a sort ?  
Remember I am she who sav'd your life,  
Your loving, lawful, and complying wife :



Not thus you swore in your unhappy hour, 355  
Nor I for this return employ'd my power.  
In time of need I was your faithful friend ;  
Nor did I since, nor ever will, offend.  
Believe me, my lov'd lord, 'tis much unkind ;  
What fury has possess'd your alter'd mind ? 360  
Thus on my wedding night without pretence—  
Come turn this way, or tell me my offence.  
If not your wife, let reason's rule persuade ;  
Name but my fault, amends shall soon be made.  
Amends ! nay, that's impossible, said he ; 365  
What change of age or ugliness can be ?  
Or, could Medea's magic mend thy face,  
Thou art descended from so mean a race,  
That never knight was match'd with such disgrace.  
What wonder, madam, if I move my side, 370  
When, if I turn, I turn to such a bride ?  
And is this all that troubles you so sore ?  
And what the devil couldst thou wish me more ?  
Ah, Benedecite, reply'd the crone ;  
Then cause of just complaining have you none. 375  
The remedy to this were soon apply'd,  
Would you be like the bridegroom to the bride ;  
But, for you say a long descended race,  
And wealth, and dignity, and power, and place,  
Make gentlemen, and that your high degree 380  
Is much disparag'd to be match'd with me ;  
Know this, my lord, nobility of blood  
Is but a glittering and fallacious good :  
The nobleman is he whose noble mind  
Is fill'd with inborn worth, unborrow'd from his kind.  
The king of heaven was in a manger laid ; 386  
And took his earth but from an humble maid ;  
Then what can birth, or mortal men bestow,  
Since floods no higher than their fountains flow ?  
We, who for name and empty honour strive, 390  
Our true nobility from him derive.  
Your ancestors, who puff your mind with pride,  
And vast estates to mighty titles ty'd,



Did not your honour, but their own, advance;  
For virtue comes not by inheritance. 395  
If you tralineate from your father's mind,  
What are you else but of a bastard kind?  
Do, as your great progenitors have done,  
And by their virtues prove yourself their son,  
No father can infuse or wit or grace: 400  
A mother comes 'across, and mars the race.  
A grandfire or a grandame taints the blood;  
And seldom three descents continue good.  
Were virtue by descent, a noble name  
Could never villanize his father's fame: 405  
But, as the first, the last of all the line  
Would, like the sun, e'en in descending shine;  
Take fire, and bear it to the darkest house,  
Betwixt king Arthur's court and Caucasus;  
If you depart, the flame shall still remain, 410  
And the bright blaze enlighten all the plain:  
Nor, till the fuel perish, can decay,  
By nature form'd on things combustible to prey.  
Such is not man, who, mixing better seed  
With worse, begets a base degenerate breed: 415  
The bad corrupts the good, and leaves behind  
No trace of all the great begetter's mind.  
The father sinks within his son, we see,  
And often rises in the third degree;  
If better luck a better mother give, 420  
Chance gave us being, and by chance we live.  
Such as our atoms were, e'en such are we,  
Or call it chance, or strong necessity:  
Thus loaded with dead weight, the will is free.  
And thus it needs must be: for seed conjoin'd 425  
Lets into Nature's work th' imperfect kind;  
But fire, th' enlivener of the general frame,  
Is one, its operation still the same.  
Its principle is in itself: while ours  
Works, as confederates war, with mingled powers;  
Or man or woman, whichsoever fails: 431  
And, oft, the vigour of the worse prevails.



Æther with sulphur blended alters hue,  
And casts a dusky gleam of Sodom blue.  
Thus, in a brute, their ancient honour ends, 435  
And the fair mermaid in a fish descends :  
The line is gone ; no longer duke or earl ;  
But, by himself degraded, turns a churl.  
Nobility of blood is but renown  
Of thy great fathers by their virtue known, 440  
And a long trail of light, to thee descending down.  
If in thy smoke it ends, their glories shine ;  
But infamy and villanage are thine.  
Then what I said before is plainly show'd,  
The true nobility proceeds from God : 445  
Nor left us by inheritance, but given  
By bounty of our stars, and grace of heaven.  
Thus from a captive Servius Tullius rose,  
Whom for his virtues the first Romans chose :  
Fabricius from their walls repell'd the foe, 450  
Whose noble hands had exercis'd the plough.  
From hence, my lord and love, I thus conclude,  
That though my homely ancestors were rude,  
Mean as I am, yet I may have the grace  
To make you father of a generous race : 455  
And noble then am I, when I begin,  
In virtue cloth'd, to cast the rags of sin.  
If poverty be my upbraided crime,  
And you believe in heaven, there was a time  
When He, the great controller of our fate, 460  
Deign'd to be man, and liv'd in low estate :  
Which he, who had the world at his dispose,  
If poverty were vice, would never choose.  
Philosophers have said, and poets sing,  
That a glad poverty's an honest thing. 465  
Content is wealth, the riches of the mind ;  
And happy he who can that treasure find.  
But the base miser starves amidst his store,  
Broods on his gold, and, griping still at more,  
Sits sadly pining, and believes he's poor. 470  
The ragged beggar, though he want relief,  
Has not to lose, and sings before the thief.



Want is a bitter and a hateful good,  
Because its virtues are not understood :  
Yet many things, impossible to thought, 475  
Have been by need to full perfection brought :  
The daring of the soul proceeds from thence,  
Sharpness of wit, and active diligence ;  
Prudence at once, and fortitude it gives,  
And, if in patience taken, mends our lives ; 480  
For e'en that indigence that brings me low,  
Makes me myself, and him above, to know.

A good which none would challenge, few would choose,  
A fair possession, which mankind refuse.

If we from wealth to poverty descend, 485  
Want gives to know the flatterer from the friend.

If I am old and ugly, well for you,  
No lewd adulterer will my love pursue ;  
Nor jealousy, the bane of marry'd life,  
Shall haunt you for a wither'd homely wife ; 490  
For age and ugliness, as all agree,  
Are the best guards of female chastity.

Yet since I see your mind is worldly bent,  
I'll do my best to further your content.  
And therefore of two gifts in my dispose, 495

Think, e'er you speak, I grant you leave to choose :  
Would you I should be still deform'd and old,  
Nauseous to touch, and loathsome to behold ;  
On this condition to remain for life

A careful, tender, and obedient wife, 500  
In all I can contribute to your ease,

And not in deed, or word, or thought, displease ?  
Or would you rather have me young and fair,  
And take the chance that happens to your share ?

Temptations are in beauty, and in youth, 505  
And how can you depend upon my truth ?

Now weigh the danger with the doubtful blifs,  
And thank yourself if aught should fall amifs.

Sore sigh'd the knight, who this long sermon heard  
At length, considering all, his heart he cheer'd ; 510  
And thus reply'd : My lady and my wife,  
To your wise conduct I resign my life :



Choose you for me, for well you understand  
The future good and ill, on either hand :  
But if an humble husband may request,  
Provide, and order all things for the best ;  
Your's be the care to profit and to please ;  
And let your subject servant take his ease.

515

Then thus in peace, quoth she, concludes the strife,  
Since I am turn'd the husband, you the wife :

520

The matrimonial victory is mine,  
Which having fairly gain'd, I will resign ;  
Forgive if I have said or done amiss,  
And seal the bargain with a friendly kiss :

I promis'd you but one content to share,

525

But now I will become both good and fair,  
No nuptial quarrel shall disturb your ease ;  
The business of my life shall be to please :  
And for my beauty, that, as time shall try ;  
But draw the curtain first, and cast your eye.

530

He look'd, and saw a creature heavenly fair,  
In bloom of youth, and of a charming air.

With joy he turn'd, and seiz'd her ivory arm ;  
And like Pygmalion found the statue warm.

Small arguments there needed to prevail,

535

A storm of kisses pour'd as thick as hail.

Thus long in mutual bliss they lay embrac'd,  
And their first love continued to the last :

One sunshine was their life, no cloud between ;  
Nor ever was a kinder couple seen.

540

And so may all our lives like theirs be led :  
Heaven send the maids young husbands fresh in bed ;  
May widows wed as often as they can,  
And ever for the better change their man ;  
And some devouring plague pursue their lives,  
Who will not well be govern'd by their wives.

546



THE  
CHARACTER OF A GOOD PARSON.

**A** PARISH priest was of the pilgrim train ;  
 An awful, reverend, and religious man.  
 His eyes diffus'd a venerable grace,  
 And charity itself was in his face.  
 Rich was his soul, though his attire was poor      5  
 (As God hath cloth'd his own ambassador) ;  
 For such, on earth, his blest'd Redeemer bore.  
 Of sixty years he seem'd ; and well might last  
 To sixty more, but that he liv'd too fast ;  
 Refin'd himself to soul, to curb the sense ;      10  
 And made almost a sin of abstinence.  
 Yet, had his aspect nothing of severe,  
 But such a face as promis'd him sincere.  
 Nothing reserv'd or sullen was to see :  
 But sweet regards, and pleasing sanctity :      15  
 Mild was his accent, and his action free.  
 With eloquence innate his tongue was arm'd ;  
 Though harsh the precept, yet the people charm'd.  
 For, letting down the golden chain from high,  
 He drew his audience upward to the sky :      20  
 And oft with holy hymns he charm'd their ears  
 (A music more melodious than the spheres :  
 For David left him, when he went to rest,  
 His lyre ; and after him he sung the best.  
 He bore his great commission in his look :      25  
 But sweetly temper'd awe ; and soften'd all he spoke.  
 He preach'd the joys of heaven, and pains of hell,  
 And warn'd the sinner with becoming zeal ;  
 But, on eternal mercy lov'd to dwell.  
 He taught the gospel rather than the law ;      30  
 And forc'd himself to drive ; but lov'd to draw.  
 For fear but freezes minds : but love, like heat,  
 Exales the soul sublime, to seek her native seat,  
 To threats the stubborn sinner oft is hard,  
 Wrapp'd in his crimes, against the storm prepar'd ;      35  
 But, when the milder beams of mercy play,  
 He melts, and throws his cumbrous cloak away.



Lightning and thunder (heaven's artillery)  
As harbingers before th' Almighty fly:  
Those but proclaim his style, and disappear ; 40  
The stiller sound succeeds, and God is there.

The tithes, his parish freely paid, he took ;  
But never sued, or curs'd with bell or book.  
With patience bearing wrong ; but offering none ;  
Since every man is free to lose his own. 45

The country churls, according to their kind,  
(Who grudge their dues, and love to be behind),  
The less he sought his offerings, pinch'd the more,  
And prais'd a priest contented to be poor.

Yet of his little he had some to spare, 50  
To feed the famish'd, and to clothe the bare :  
For mortify'd he was to that degree,  
A poorer than himself he would not see.

True priests, he said, and preachers of the word,  
Were only stewards of their sovereign Lord ; 55  
Nothing was theirs ; but all the public store ;  
Intrusted riches, to relieve the poor.

Who, should they steal, for want of his relief,  
He judg'd himself accomplice with the thief.

Wide was his parish ; not contracted close 60  
In streets, but here and there a straggling house ;  
Yet still he was at hand, without request,  
To serve the sick, to succour the distress'd :  
Tempting, on foot, alone, without affright,  
The dangers of a dark tempestuous night. 65

All this the good old man perform'd alone,  
Nor spar'd his pains ; for curate he had none,  
Nor durst he trust another with his care ;  
Nor rode himself to Paul's, the public fair,  
To chaffer for preferment with his gold, 70  
Where bishoprics and sinecures are sold.  
But duly watch'd his flock, by night and day ;  
And from the prowling wolf redeem'd the prey :  
And hungry sent the wily fox away.

The proud he tam'd, the penitent he cheer'd : 75  
Nor to rebuke the rich offender fear'd.



His preaching much, but more his practice wrought  
 (A living sermon of the truths he taught) ;  
 For this by rules severe his life he squar'd :  
 That all might see the doctrine which they heard : 80  
 For priests, he said, are patterns for the rest  
 (The gold of heaven, who bear the God impress'd :)  
 But when the precious coin is kept unclean,  
 The sovereign's image is no longer seen.

If they be foul on whom the people trust, 85  
 Well may the baser brass contract a rust.

The prelate, for his holy life he priz'd ;  
 The worldly pomp of prelacy despis'd.  
 His Saviour came not with a gaudy show :  
 Nor was his kingdom of the world below. 90

Patience in want, and poverty of mind,  
 These marks of church and churchmen he design'd,  
 And living taught, and dying left behind.  
 The crown he wore was of the pointed thorn :  
 In purple he was crucify'd, not born. 95

They who contend for place and high degree,  
 Are not his sons, but those of Zebedee.

Not but he knew the signs of earthly power  
 Might well become Saint Peter's successor ;  
 The holy father holds a double reign, 100  
 The prince may keep his pomp, the fisher must be plain.

Such was the saint ; who shone with every grace,  
 Reflecting, Moses like, his Maker's face.  
 God saw his image lively was express'd ;  
 And his own work, as in creation blest'd. 105

The tempter saw him too with envious eye ;  
 And, as on Job, demanded leave to try.  
 He took the time when Richard was depos'd,  
 And high and low with happy Harry clos'd.  
 This prince, though great in arms, the priest withstood :  
 Near though he was, yet not the next in blood. 110  
 Had Richard unconstrain'd, resign'd the throne,  
 A king can give no more than is his own :  
 The title stood entail'd, had Richard had a son.

Conquest, an odious name, was laid aside, 115  
 Where all submitted, none the battle try'd.



The senseless plea of right by providence  
 Was, by a flattering priest, invented since ;  
 And lasts no longer than the present sway ;  
 But justifies the next who comes in play. 120

The people's right remains ; let those who dare  
 Dispute their power, when they the judges are.

He join'd not in their choice, because he knew  
 Worse might, and often did, from change ensue.  
 Much to himself he thought ; but little spoke ; 125  
 And, undpriv'd, his benefice forsook.

Now, through the land, his cure of souls he stretch'd :  
 And like a primitive apostle preach'd.

Still cheerful ; ever constant to his call ;  
 By many follow'd ; lov'd by most ; admir'd by all. 130

With what he begg'd his brethren he reliev'd,  
 And gave the charities himself receiv'd.

Gave, while he taught ; and edify'd the more,  
 Because he shew'd, by proof, 'twas easy to be poor.

He went not with the crowd to see a shrine ; 135  
 But fed us, by the way, with food divine.

In deference to his virtues, I forbear  
 To shew you what the rest in orders were :

This brilliant is so spotless, and so bright, 140  
 He needs no foil, but shines by his own proper light.





## SIGISMONDA AND GUISCARDO.

**W**HILE Norman Tancred in Salerno reign'd,  
 The title of a gracious prince he gain'd ;  
 Till, turn'd a tyrant in his latter days,  
 He lost the lustre of his former praise ;  
 And from the bright meridian where he stood, 5  
 Descending, dipt his hands in lover's blood.  
 This prince, of Fortune's favour long possess'd,  
 Yet was with one fair daughter only blest'd ;  
 And blest'd he might have been with her alone ;  
 But oh ! how much more happy had he none ! 10  
 She was his care, his hope, and his delight,  
 Most in his thought, and ever in his sight ;  
 Next, nay beyond, his life, he held her dear ;  
 She liv'd by him, and now he liv'd in her.  
 For this, when ripe for marriage, he delay'd 15  
 Her nuptial bands, and kept her long a maid,  
 As envying any else should share a part  
 Of what was his, and claiming all her heart.  
 At length, as public decency requir'd,  
 And all his vassals eagerly desir'd, 20  
 With mind averse, he rather underwent  
 His people's will, than gave his own consent.  
 So was she torn, as from a lover's side,  
 And made almost in his despite a bride.  
 Short were her marriage joys ; for in her prime 25  
 Of youth, her lord expir'd before his time ;  
 And to her father's court in little space  
 Restor'd anew, she held a higher place ;  
 More lov'd, and more exalted into grace.  
 This princess, fresh and young, and fair and wise, 30  
 The worshipp'd idol of her father's eyes,  
 Did all her sex in every grace exceed,  
 And had more wit beside than women need.  
 Youth, health, and ease, and most an amorous mind,  
 To second nuptials had her thoughts inclin'd : 35  
 And former joys had left a secret sting behind.



But, prodigal in every other grant,  
 Her fire left unsupply'd her only want;  
 And she, betwixt her modesty and pride,  
 Her wishes, which she could not help, would hide. 40

Resolv'd at last to lose no longer time,  
 And yet to please herself without a crime,  
 She cast her eyes around the court, to find  
 A worthy subject suiting to her mind,  
 To him in holy nuptials to be ty'd, 45  
 A seeming widow, and a secret bride.

Among the train of courtiers, one she found  
 With all the gifts of bounteous nature crown'd,  
 Of gentle blood; but one whose niggard fate  
 Had set him far below her high estate; 50  
 Guiscard his name was call'd, of blooming age,  
 Now squire to Tancred, and before his page:  
 To him, the choice of all the shining crowd,  
 Her heart the noble Sigismonda vow'd.

Yet hitherto she kept her love conceal'd, 55  
 And with those graces every day beheld  
 The graceful youth, and every day increas'd  
 The raging fires that burn'd within her breast;  
 Some secret charm did all her acts attend,  
 And what his fortune wanted, her's could mend; 60  
 Till, as the fire will force its outward way,  
 Or, in the prison pent, consume the prey;  
 So long her earnest eyes on his were set,  
 At length their twisted rays together met;  
 And he, surpris'd with humble joy, survey'd 65  
 One sweet regard, shot by the royal maid:  
 Not well assur'd, while doubtful hopes he nurs'd,  
 A second glance came gliding like the first;  
 And he, who saw the sharpness of the dart,  
 Without defence receiv'd it in his heart. 70

In public, though their passion wanted speech,  
 Yet mutual looks interpreted for each;  
 Time, ways, and means of meeting were deny'd;  
 But all those wants ingenious love supply'd.  
 Th' inventive God, who never fails his part, 75  
 Inspires the wit, when once he warms the heart.



When Guiscard next was in the circle seen,  
 Where Sigismonda held the place of queen,  
 A hollow cane within her hand she brought,  
 But in the concave had inclos'd a note ; 80  
 With this she seem'd to play, and, as in sport,  
 Toss'd to her love, in presence of the court ;  
 Take it, she said ; and when your needs require,  
 This little brand will serve to light your fire.  
 He took it with a bow, and soon divin'd 85  
 The seeming toy was not for nought design'd :  
 But when retir'd, so long with curious eyes  
 He view'd his present, that he found the prize.  
 Much was in little writ ; and all convey'd  
 With cautious care, for fear to be betray'd 90  
 By some false confident, or favourite maid.  
 The time, the place, the manner how to meet,  
 Were all in punctual order plainly writ :  
 But, since a trust must be, she thought it best  
 To put it out of laymen's power at least ; 95  
 And for their solemn vows prepar'd a priest.  
 Guiscard (her secret purpose understood)  
 With joy prepar'd to meet the coming good ;  
 Nor pains nor danger was resolv'd to spare,  
 But use the means appointed by the fair. 100

Next the proud palace of Salerno stood  
 A mount of rough ascent, and thick with wood.  
 Through this a cave was dug with vast expence :  
 The work it seem'd of some suspicious prince,  
 Who, when abusing power with lawless might, 105  
 From public justice would secure his flight.  
 The passage made by many a winding way,  
 Reach'd ev'n the room in which the tyrant lay.  
 Fit for his purpose on a lower floor,  
 He lodg'd, whose issue was an iron door ; 110  
 From whence, by stairs descending to the ground,  
 In the blind grot a safe retreat he found,  
 Its outlet ended in a brake o'ergrown  
 With brambles, chok'd by time, and now unknown.  
 A rift there was, which from the mountain's height  
 Convey'd a glimmering and malignant light, 116



A breathing-place to draw the damps away,  
 A twilight of an intercepted day.  
 The tyrant's den, whose use, though lost to fame,  
 Was now th' apartment of the royal dame ; 120  
 The cavern only to her father known,  
 By him was to his darling daughter shown.  
 Neglected long she let the secret rest,  
 Till love recall'd it to her labouring breast,  
 And hinted as the way by heaven design'd 125  
 The teacher, by the means he taught, to blind.  
 What will not women do, when need inspires  
 Their wit, or love their inclination fires !  
 Though jealousy of state th' invention found,  
 Yet love refin'd upon the former ground. 130  
 That way, the tyrant had reserv'd, to fly  
 Pursuing hate, now serv'd to bring two lovers nigh,  
 The dame, who long in vain had kept the key,  
 Bold by desire, explor'd the secret way ;  
 Now try'd the stairs, and, wading through the night,  
 Search'd all the deep recess, and issued into light. 136  
 All this her letter had so well explain'd,  
 Th' instructed youth might compass what remain'd ;  
 The cavern's mouth alone was hard to find,  
 Because the path, diffus'd, was out of mind ; 140  
 But in what quarter of the copse it lay,  
 His eye, by certain level could survey :  
 Yet (for the wood perplex'd with thorns he knew)  
 A frock of leather o'er his limbs he drew ;  
 And thus provided, search'd the brake around, 145  
 Till the choak'd entry of the cave he found.  
 Thus, all prepar'd, the promis'd hour arriv'd  
 So long expected, and so well contriv'd :  
 With love to friend, th' impatient lover went,  
 Fenc'd from the thorns, and trod the deep descent. 150  
 The conscious priest, who was suborn'd before,  
 Stood ready posted at the postern door ;  
 The maids in distant rooms were sent to rest,  
 And nothing wanted but th' invited guest.  
 He came, and knocking thrice without delay, 155  
 The longing lady heard, and turn'd the key ;



At once invaded him with all her charms,  
And the first step he made was in her arms ;  
The leathern outside, bolsterous as it was,  
Gave way, and bent beneath her strict embrace ; 160  
On either side the kisses flew so thick,  
That neither he nor she had breath to speak.

The holy man, amaz'd at what he saw,  
Made haste to sanctify the bliss by law ;  
And mutter'd fast the matrimony o'er, 165  
For fear committed sin should get before.

His work perform'd, he left the pair alone,  
Because he knew he could not go too soon ;  
His presence odious, when his task was done.  
What thoughts he had beseems me not to say ; 170  
Though some surmise he went to fast and pray,  
And needed both to drive the tempting thoughts away.

The foe once gone, they took their full delight,  
'Twas restless rage, and tempest all the night ;  
For greedy love each moment would employ, 175  
And grudg'd the shortest pauses of their joy.

Thus were their loves auspiciously begun,  
And thus with secret care were carried on.  
The stealth itself did appetite restore,  
And look'd so like a sin, it pleas'd the more. 180

The cave was now become a common way,  
The wicket, often open'd, knew the key :  
Love rioted secure, and long enjoy'd,  
Was ever eager, and was never cloy'd.

But as extremes are short, of ill and good, 185  
And tides at highest mark regorge their flood ;  
So fate, that could no more improve their joy,  
Took a malicious pleasure to destroy.

Tancred, who fondly lov'd, and whose delight  
Was plac'd in his fair daughter's daily sight, 190  
Of custom, when his state affairs were done,  
Would pass his pleasing hours with her alone ;  
And, as a father's privilege allow'd,  
Without attendance of the officious crowd.

It happen'd once, that when in heat of day 195  
He try'd to sleep, as was his usual way,



The balmy slumber fled his wakeful eyes,  
 And forc'd him, in his own despite, to rise :  
 Of sleep forsaken, to relieve his care,  
 He sought the conversation of the fair ; 200  
 But with her train of damsels she was gone,  
 In shady walks the scorching heat to shun :  
 He would not violate that sweet recess,  
 And found besides a welcome heaviness,  
 That seiz'd his eyes ; and slumber, which forgot 205  
 When call'd before to come, now came unsought.  
 From light retir'd, behind his daughter's bed,  
 He for approaching sleep compos'd his head ;  
 A chair was ready for that use design'd,  
 So quilted, that he lay at ease reclin'd ; 210  
 The curtains closely drawn, the light to screen,  
 As if he had contriv'd to lie unseen :  
 Thus cover'd with an artificial night,  
 Sleep did his office soon, and seal'd his sight.

With heaven averse in this ill-omen'd hour 215  
 Was Guiscard summon'd to the secret bower,  
 And the fair nymph with expectation fir'd,  
 From her attending damsels was retir'd :  
 For, true to love, she measur'd time so right,  
 As not to miss one moment of delight. 220

The garden seated on the level floor,  
 She left behind, and, locking every door,  
 Thought all secure ; but little did she know,  
 Blind to her fate, she had inclos'd her foe.  
 Attending Guiscard, in his leathern frock, 225  
 Stood ready, with his thrice-repeated knock :  
 Thrice with a doleful sound the jarring grate  
 Rung deaf and hollow, and presag'd their fate.  
 The door unlock'd, to known delight they haste,  
 And, panting in each other's arms embrac'd, 230  
 Rush to the conscious bed, a mutual freight,  
 And heedless press it with their wonted weight.

The sudden bound awak'd the sleeping fire,  
 And shew'd a sight no parent can desire :  
 His opening eyes at once with odious view 235  
 The love discover'd, and the lover knew :



He would have cry'd; but hoping that he dreamt,  
Amazement ty'd his tongue, and stopp'd th' attempt.  
Th' ensuing moment all the truth declar'd,  
But now he stood collected, and prepar'd, 240  
For Malice and Revenge had put him on his guard.  
So like a lion, that unheeded lay,  
Dissembling sleep, and watchful to betray,  
With inward rage he meditates his prey.  
The thoughtless pair, indulging their desires: 245  
Alternate, kindled, and then quench'd their fires;  
Nor thinking in the shades of death they play'd,  
Full of themselves, themselves alone survey'd,  
And, too secure, were by themselves betray'd.  
Long time dissolv'd in pleasure thus they lay, 250  
Till nature could no more suffice their play;  
Then rose the youth, and through the cave again  
Return'd; the princess mingled with her train.

Resolv'd his unripe vengeance to defer,  
The royal spy, when now the coast was clear, 255  
Sought not the garden, but retir'd unseen,  
To brood in secret on his gather'd spleen,  
And methodize revenge: to death he griev'd;  
And, but he saw the crime, had scarc'd believ'd.  
Th' appointment for the ensuing night he heard; 260  
And therefore in the cavern had prepar'd  
Two brawny yoemen of his trusty guard.

Scarce had unwary Guiscard set his foot  
Within the foremost entrance of the grot,  
When these in secret ambush ready lay; 265  
And rushing on the sudden seiz'd the prey:  
Encumber'd with his frock, without defence,  
An easy prize, they led the prisoner thence,  
And, as commanded, brought before the prince.  
The gloomy fire, too sensible of wrong, 270  
To vent his rage in words, restrain'd his tongue,  
And only said, Thus servants are preferr'd,  
And, trusted, thus their sovereigns they reward.  
Had I not seen, had not these eyes receiv'd  
Too clear a proof, I could not have believ'd. 275



He paus'd, and chok'd the rest. The youth, who saw  
 His forfeit life abandon'd to the law,  
 The judge, th' accuser, and the offence to him  
 Who had both power and will t' avenge the crime,  
 No vain defence prepar'd ; but thus reply'd : 280  
 The faults of love by love are justify'd :  
 With unresisted might the monarch reigns,  
 He levels mountains, and he raises plains :  
 And, not regarding difference of degree,  
 Abas'd your daughter, and exalted me. 285

This bold return with seeming patience heard,  
 The prisoner was remitted to the guard.  
 The sullen tyrant slept not all the night,  
 But lonely walking by a winking light, 289  
 Sobb'd, wept, and groan'd, and beat his wither'd  
 But would not violate his daughter's rest ; [breast,  
 Who long expecting lay, for bliss prepar'd,  
 Listening for noise, and griev'd that none she heard ;  
 Oft rose, and oft in vain employ'd the key,  
 And oft accus'd her lover of delay ; 295  
 And pass'd the tedious hours in anxious thoughts away.

The morrow came : and at his usual hour  
 Old Tancred visited his daughter's bower ;  
 Her cheek (for such his custom was) he kiss'd,  
 Then bless'd her kneeling, and her maids dismiss'd. 300  
 The royal dignity thus far maintain'd,  
 Now left in private, he no longer feign'd ;  
 But all at once his grief and rage appear'd,  
 And floods of tears ran trickling down his beard.

O Sigismonda, he began to say : 305  
 Thrice he began, and thrice was forc'd to stay,  
 Till words with often trying found their way :  
 I thought, O Sigismonda, (but how blind  
 Are parents' eyes, their children's faults to find !)  
 Thy virtue, birth, and breeding, were above 310  
 A mean desire, and vulgar sense of love :  
 Nor less than sight and hearing could convince  
 So fond a father, and so just a prince,  
 Of such an unforeseen, and unbeliev'd offence.



Then what indignant sorrow must I have,  
To see thee lie subjected to my slave !  
A man so smelling of the people's lee,  
The court receiv'd him first for charity ;  
And since with no degree of honour grac'd,  
But only suffer'd where he first was plac'd. 320  
A groveling insect still ; and so design'd  
By nature's hand, nor born of noble kind :  
A thing, by neither man nor woman priz'd,  
And scarcely known enough to be despis'd.  
To what has heaven reserv'd my age ? Ah ! why 325  
Should man, when nature calls, not choose to die,  
Rather than stretch the span of life, to find  
Such ills as fate has wisely cast behind,  
For those to feel, whom fond desire to live  
Makes covetous of more than life can give ? 330  
Each has his share of good ; and when 'tis gone,  
The guest, though hungry, cannot rise too soon.  
But I, expecting more, in my own wrong  
Protracting life, have liv'd a day too long.  
If yesterday could be recall'd again, 335  
Ev'n now would I conclude my happy reign ;  
But 'tis too late, my glorious race is run,  
And a dark cloud o'ertakes my setting sun.  
Had'st thou not lov'd, or loving sav'd the shame,  
If not the sin, by some illustrious name, 340  
This little comfort had reliev'd my mind,  
'Twas frailty, not unusual to thy kind :  
But thy low fall beneath thy royal blood  
Shews downward appetite to mix with mud :  
Thus not the least excuse is left for thee, 345  
Nor the least refuge for unhappy me.

For him I have resolv'd, whom by surprise  
I took, and scarce can call it, in disguise ;  
For such was his attire, as, with intent  
Of nature, suited to his mean descent : 350  
The harder question yet remains behind,  
What pains a parent and a prince can find  
To punish an offence of this degenerate kind.



As I have lov'd, and yet I love thee more  
 Than ever father lov'd a child before ; 355  
 So that indulgence draws me to forgive :  
 Nature, that gave thee life, would have thee live :  
 But, as a public parent of the state,  
 My justice, and thy crime, requires thy fate.  
 Fain would I choose a middle course to steer : 360  
 Nature's too kind, and justice too severe :  
 Speak for us both, and to the balance bring  
 On either side the father and the king.

Heaven knows, my heart is bent to favour thee ;  
 Make it but scanty weight, and leave the rest to me.

Here stopping with a sigh, he pour'd a flood 366  
 Of tears, to make his last expression good.

She, who had heard him speak, nor saw alone  
 The secret conduct of her love was known,  
 But he was taken who her soul possess'd, 370  
 Felt all the pangs of sorrow in her breast :

And little wanted, but a woman's heart,  
 With cries and tears had testify'd her smart,  
 But inborn worth, that fortune can control,  
 New strung and stiffer bent her softer soul ; 375

The heroine assum'd the woman's place,  
 Confirm'd her mind, and fortify'd her face :  
 Why should she beg, or what could she pretend,  
 When her stern father had condemn'd her friend ?  
 Her life she might have had ; but her despair 380  
 Of saving his, had put it past her care ;

Resolv'd on fate, she would not lose her breath,  
 But rather than not die, solicit death.  
 Fix'd on this thought, she, not as women use,  
 Her fault by common frailty would excuse ; 385  
 But boldly justify'd her innocence,

And while the fact was own'd, deny'd th' offence :  
 Then with dry eyes, and with an open look,  
 She met his glance mid-way, and thus undaunted spoke:  
 Tancred, I neither am dispos'd to make 390

Request for life, nor offer'd life to take ;  
 Much less deny the deed ; but least of all  
 Beneath pretended justice weakly fall.



My words to sacred truth shall be confin'd,  
My deeds shall shew the greatness of my mind. 395  
That I have lov'd, I own; that still I love,  
I call to witness all the powers above;  
Yet more I own: to Guiscard's love I give  
The small remaining time I have to live;  
And if beyond this life desire can be, 400  
Not fate itself shall set my passion free.  
This first avow'd; nor folly warp'd my mind,  
Nor the frail texture of the female kind  
Betray'd my virtue; for, too well I knew  
What honour was, and honour had his due: 405  
Before the holy priest my vows were ty'd,  
So came I not a strumpet, but a bride.  
This for my fame, and for the public voice:  
Yet more, his merits justify'd my choice:  
Which had they not, the first election thine, 410  
That bond dissolv'd, the next is freely mine;  
Or grant I err'd, (which yet I must deny)  
Had parents power ev'n second vows to tie,  
Thy little care to mend my widow'd nights,  
Has forc'd me to recourse of marriage rites, 415  
To fill an empty side, and follow known delights.  
What have I done in this, deserving blame?  
State-laws may alter; nature's are the same;  
Those are usurp'd on helpless woman-kind,  
Made without our consent, and wanting power to bind.  
Thou, Tancred, better shouldst have understood, 420  
That as thy father gave thee flesh and blood,  
So gav'st thou me: not from the quarry hew'd,  
But of a softer mould, with sense endu'd;  
Ev'n softer than thy own, of suppler kind,  
More exquisite of taste, and more than man refin'd. 425  
Nor need'st thou by thy daughter to be told,  
Though now thy sprightly blood with age be cold,  
Thou hast been young, and canst remember still,  
That when thou hadst the power, thou hadst the will;  
And from the past experience of thy fires, 430  
Canst tell with what a tide our strong desires [quires.  
Come rushing on in youth, and what their rage re-



And grant thy youth was exercis'd in arms,  
 When love no leisure found for softer charms,  
 My tender age in luxury was train'd, 435  
 With idle ease and pageants entertain'd ;  
 My hours my own, my pleasures unrestrain'd.  
 So bred, no wonder if I took the bent  
 That seem'd ev'n warranted by thy consent ;  
 For, when the father is too fondly kind, 440  
 Such seed he sows, such harvest shall he find.  
 Blame then thyself as reason's law requires,  
 (Since nature gave, and thou foment'st my fires) ;  
 If still those appetites continue strong,  
 Thou may'st consider I am yet but young : 445  
 Consider too, that having been a wife,  
 I must have tasted of a better life ;  
 And am not to be blam'd, if I renew  
 By lawful means the joys which then I knew.  
 Where was the crime, if pleasure I procur'd, 450  
 Young, and a woman, and to bliss inur'd !  
 That was my case, and this is my defence :  
 I pleas'd myself, I shunn'd incontinence,  
 And, urg'd by strong desires, indulg'd my sense.  
 Left to myself, I must avow, I strove 455  
 From public shame, to screen my secret love,  
 And, well acquainted with thy native pride,  
 Endeavoured what I could not help, to hide ;  
 For which a woman's wit an easy way supply'd.  
 How this, so well contriv'd, so closely laid, 460  
 Was known to thee, or what by chance betray'd,  
 Is not my care ; to please thy pride alone,  
 I could have wish'd it had been still unknown.  
 Nor took I Guiscard by blind fancy led,  
 Or hasty choice, as many women wed ; 465  
 But with deliberate care, and ripen'd thought,  
 At leisure first design'd, before I wrought :  
 On him I rested, after long debate,  
 And, not without considering, fix'd my fate :  
 His flame was equal, though by mine inspir'd 470  
 (For so the difference of our birth requir'd) ;



Had he been born like me, like me his love  
Had first begun, what mine was forc'd to move :  
But thus beginning, thus we persevere ;  
Our passions yet continue what they were, 475  
Nor length of trial makes our joys the less sincere.  
At this my choice, though not by thine allow'd  
(Thy judgment herding with the common crowd),  
Thou tak'st unjust offence ; and, led by them,  
Dost less the merit, than the man esteem. 480  
Too sharply, Tancred, by thy pride betray'd,  
Hast thou against the laws of kind inveigh'd :  
For all th' offence is in opinion plac'd,  
Which deems high birth by lowly choice debas'd.  
This thought alone with fury fires thy breast 485  
(For holy marriage justifies the rest),  
That I have sunk the glories of the state,  
And mix'd my blood with a plebeian mate ;  
In which I wonder thou should'st oversee  
Superior causes, or impute to me 490  
The fault of fortune, or the fates' decree.  
Or call it heaven's imperial power alone,  
Which moves on springs of justice, though unknown.  
Yet this we see, though order'd for the best,  
The bad exalted, and the good oppress'd ; 495  
Permitted laurels grace the lawless brow,  
Th' unworthy rais'd, the worthy cast below.

But leaving that : search we the secret springs,  
And backward trace the principles of things ;  
There shall we find, that when the world began, 500  
One common mass compos'd the mould of man ;  
One paste of flesh on all degrees bestow'd,  
And kneaded up alike with moistening blood.  
The same almighty power inspir'd the frame  
With kindled life, and form'd the souls the same : 505  
The faculties of intellect and will  
Dispens'd with equal hand, dispos'd with equal skill,  
Like liberty indulg'd with choice of good or ill :  
Thus born alike, from virtue first began  
The difference that distinguish'd man from man : 510



He claim'd no title from descent of blood,  
But that which made him noble made him good :  
Warm'd with more particles of heavenly flame,  
He wing'd his upright flight, and soar'd to fame ;  
The rest remain'd below, a tribe without a name. 515

This law, though custom now diverts the course,  
As nature's institute is yet in force ;  
Uncancel'd, though diffus'd ; and he, whose mind  
Is virtuous, is alone of noble kind ;  
Though poor in fortune, of celestial race ; 520  
And he commits the crime who calls him base.

Now lay the line, and measure all thy court,  
By inward virtue, not external port ;  
And find whom justly to prefer above  
The man on whom my judgment plac'd my love ; 525  
So shalt thou see his parts and person shine ;  
And, thus compar'd, the rest a base degenerate line.  
Nor took I, when I first survey'd thy court,  
His valour, or his virtues on report :

But trusted what I ought to trust alone, 530  
Relying on thy eyes, and not my own ;  
Thy praise, (and thine was then the public voice)  
First recommended Guiscard to my choice ;  
Directed thus by thee, I look'd and found  
A man I thought deserving to be crown'd ; 535  
First by my father pointed to my sight,  
Nor less conspicuous by his native light :  
His mind, his mien, the features of his face,  
Excelling all the rest of human race :

These were thy thoughts, and thou couldst judge aright,  
Till interest made a jaundice in thy sight ; 541  
Or should I grant thou didst not rightly see,  
Then thou wert first deceiv'd, and I deceiv'd by thee. .  
But if thou shalt alledge, through pride of mind,  
Thy blood with one of base condition join'd, 545  
'Tis false ; for 'tis not baseness to be poor ;  
His poverty augments thy crime the more ;  
Upbraids thy justice with the scant regard  
Of worth ; whom princes praise, they should reward.



Are these the kings intrusted by the crowd 550  
With wealth, to be dispens'd for common good?  
The people sweat not for their king's delight,  
T' enrich a pimp, or raise a parasite;  
Their's is the toil; and he who well has serv'd  
His country, has his country's wealth deserv'd. 555  
Ev'n mighty monarchs oft are meanly born,  
And kings by birth to lowest rank return;  
All subject to the power of giddy chance,  
For fortune can depress, or can advance;  
But true nobility is of the mind, 560  
Not given by chance, and not to chance design'd.

For the remaining doubt of thy decree,  
What to resolve, and how dispose of me,  
Be warn'd to cast that useless care aside,  
Myself alone will for myself provide. 565  
If, in thy doting and decrepit age,  
Thy soul, a stranger in thy youth to rage,  
Begins in cruel deeds to take delight,  
Gorge with my blood thy barbarous appetite;  
For I so little am dispos'd to pray 570  
For life, I would not cast a wish away.  
Such as it is, th' offence is all my own;  
And what to Guiscard is already done,  
Or to be done, is doom'd by thy decree,  
That, if not executed first by thee, 575  
Shall on my person be perform'd by me.

Away, with women weep, and leave me here,  
Fix'd like a man, to die without a tear,  
Or save, or slay us both this present hour,  
'Tis all that fate has left within thy power. 580

She said: nor did her father fail to find,  
In all she spoke, the greatness of her mind;  
Yet thought she was not obstinate to die,  
Nor deem'd the death she promis'd was so nigh:  
Secure in this belief, he left the dame, 585  
Resolv'd to spare her life, and save her shame;  
But that detested object to remove,  
To wreak his vengeance, and to cure her love.



Intent on this, a secret order sign'd,  
 The death of Guiscard to his guards enjoin'd ; 590  
 Strangling was chosen, and the night the time,  
 A mute revenge and blind as was the crime :  
 His faithful heart a bloody sacrifice,  
 Torn from his breast to glut the tyrant's eyes,  
 Clos'd the severe command (for, slaves to pay) 595  
 What kings decree, the soldier must obey :  
 Wag'd against foes ; and when the wars are o'er,  
 Fit only to maintain despotic power :  
 Dangerous to freedom, and desir'd alone  
 By kings who seek an arbitrary throne ; 600  
 Such were these guards ; as ready to have slain  
 The prince himself, allur'd with greater gain ;  
 So was the charge perform'd with better will,  
 By men inur'd to blood, and exercis'd in ill.

Now, though the fullen fire had eas'd his mind, 605  
 The pomp of his revenge was yet behind,  
 A pomp prepar'd to grace the present he design'd.  
 A goblet rich with gems, and rough with gold,  
 Of depth and breadth, the precious pledge to hold,  
 With cruel care he chose : the hollow part 610  
 Inclos'd, the lid conceal'd the lover's heart :  
 Then of his trusted mischiefs one he sent,  
 And bade him with these words the gift present :  
 Thy father sends thee this to cheer thy breast,  
 And glad thy sight with what thou lov'st the best ; 615  
 As thou hast pleas'd his eyes, and joy'd his mind,  
 With what he lov'd the most of human kind.

Ere this the royal dame, who well had weigh'd  
 The consequence of what her fire had said,  
 Fix'd on her fate, against th' expected hour, 620  
 Procur'd the means to have it in her power ;  
 For this, she had distill'd with early care  
 The juice of simples friendly to despair,  
 A magazine of death ; and thus prepar'd,  
 Secure to die, the fatal message heard : 625  
 Then smil'd severe ; nor with a troubled look,  
 Or trembling hand, the funeral present took :



Ev'n kept her countenance, when the lid remov'd  
Disclos'd the heart, unfortunately lov'd;  
She needed not be told, within whose breast 630  
It lodg'd; the message had explain'd the rest.  
Or not amaz'd, or hiding her surprise,  
She sternly on the bearer fix'd her eyes:  
Then thus: Tell Tancred, on his daughter's part,  
The gold, though precious, equals not the heart: 635  
But he did well to give his best; and I,  
Who wish'd a worthier urn, forgive his poverty.

At this she curb'd a groan, that else had come,  
And, pausing, view'd the present in the tomb;  
Then, to the heart ador'd devoutly glew'd 640  
Her lips, and, raising it, her speech renew'd:  
Ev'n from my day of birth, to this, the bound  
Of my unhappy being, I have found  
My father's care and tenderness express'd;  
But this last act of love excels the rest: 645  
For this so dear a present, bear him back  
The best return that I can live to make.

The messenger dispatch'd, again she view'd  
The lov'd remains, and sighing thus pursu'd:  
Source of my life, and lord of my desires, 650  
In whom I liv'd, with whom my soul expires,  
Poor heart, no more the spring of vital heat,  
Curs'd be the hands that tore thee from thy seat!  
The course is finish'd which thy fates decreed,  
And thou from thy corporeal prison freed: 655  
Soon has thou reach'd the goal with mended pace,  
A world of woes dispatch'd in little space;  
Forc'd by thy worth, thy foe, in death become  
Thy friend, has lodg'd thee in a costly tomb.  
There yet remain'd thy funeral exequies, 660  
The weeping tribute of thy widow's eyes,  
And those, indulgent heaven has found the way  
That I, before my death, have leave to pay.  
My father, ev'n in cruelty is kind,  
Or heav'n has turn'd the malice of his mind 665  
To better uses than his hate design'd;



And made th' insult which in his gift appears,  
 The means to mourn thee with my pious tears ;  
 Which I will pay thee down before I go,  
 And save myself the pains to weep below, 670  
 If souls can weep ; though once I meant to meet  
 My fate with face unmov'd, and eyes unwet,  
 Yet since I have thee here in narrow room,  
 My tears shall set thee first afloat within thy tomb :  
 Then (as I know thy spirit hovers nigh) 675  
 Under thy friendly conduct will I fly  
 To regions unexplor'd, secure to share  
 Thy state ; nor hell shall punishment appear ;  
 And heaven is double heaven, if thou art there.

She said, her brimful eyes, that ready stood, 680  
 And only wanted will to keep a flood,  
 Releas'd their watery store, and pour'd amain,  
 Like clouds low hung, a sober shower of rain :  
 Mute solemn sorrow, free from female noise,  
 Such as the majesty of grief destroys ; 685  
 For, bending o'er the cup, the tears she shed  
 Seem'd by the posture to discharge her head,  
 O'erfill'd before (and oft her mouth apply'd  
 To the cold heart) ; she kiss'd at once, and cry'd.  
 Her maids, who stood amaz'd, nor knew the cause 690  
 Of her complaining, nor whose heart it was ;  
 Yet all due measures of her mourning kept,  
 Did office at the dirge, and by infection wept ;  
 And oft inquir'd th' occasion of her grief  
 (Unanswer'd but by sighs), and offer'd vain relief. 695  
 At length, her stock of tears already shed,  
 She wip'd her eyes, she rais'd her drooping head,  
 And thus pursu'd : O ever faithful heart,  
 I have perform'd the ceremonial part,  
 The decencies of grief : it rests behind, 700  
 That, as our bodies were, our souls be join'd ;  
 To thy whate'er abode, my shade convey,  
 And, as an elder ghost, direct the way.  
 She said ; and bade the phial to be brought,  
 Where she before had brew'd the deadly draught : 705









*Dryden's Poems, Vide Sigismunda and Guiscardo, Vol. III. Page 213. line 143.*  
The Prince's anguish hinder'd his reply,  
And she, who felt her fate approaching nigh,  
Seiz'd the cold heart, & heaving to her breast,  
Here precious pledge, she said, securely rest!  
*Drawn by R. Corbould. Engraved by G. Warren, for C. Cooke. Jan. 11. 1799.*



First pouring out the med'cinable bane,  
The heart, her tears had rins'd, she bath'd again;  
Then down her throat the death securely throws,  
And quaffs a long oblivion of her woes.

This done, she mounts the genial bed, and there 710  
(Her body first compos'd with honest care)  
Attends the welcome rest; her hands yet hold  
Close to her heart the monumental gold;  
Nor farther word she spoke, but clos'd her sight,  
And quiet sought the covert of the night. 715

The damsels, who the while in silence mourn'd,  
Not knowing, nor suspecting death suborn'd,  
Yet, as their duty was, to Tancred sent;  
Who, conscious of th' occasion, fear'd th' event.  
Alarm'd, and with presaging heart he came, 720  
And drew the curtains, and expos'd the dame  
To loathsome light: then with a late relief  
Made vain efforts to mitigate her grief.

She, what she could, excluding day, her eyes  
Kept firmly seal'd, and sternly thus replies: 725  
Tancred, restrain thy tears, unsought by me,  
And sorrow unavailing now to thee:

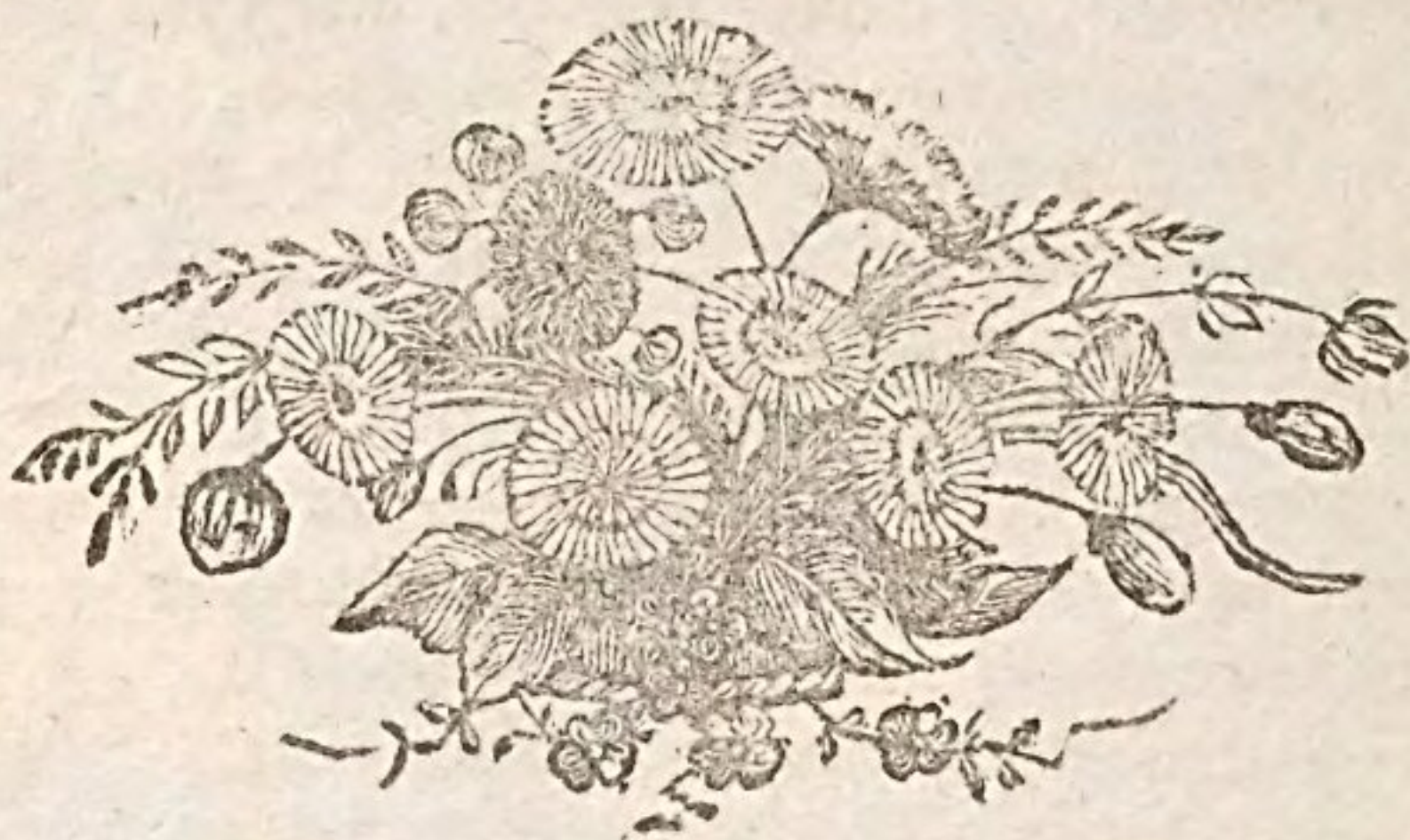
Did ever man before afflict his mind,  
To see th' effect of what himself design'd?  
Yet, if thou hast remaining in thy heart 730  
Some sense of love, some unextinguish'd part  
Of former kindness, largely once profess'd,  
Let me by that abjure thy harden'd breast,  
Not to deny thy daughter's last request:

The secret love which I so long enjoy'd, 735  
And still conceal'd to gratify thy pride,  
Thou hast disjoin'd: but with my dying breath,  
Seek not, I beg thee, to disjoin our death;  
Where'er his corpse by thy command is laid,  
Thither let mine in public be convey'd; 740  
Expos'd in open view, and side by side,  
Acknowledg'd as a bridegroom and a bride.

The prince's anguish hinder'd his reply:  
And she, who felt her fate approaching nigh,



Seiz'd the cold heart, and, heaving to her breast, 745  
Here, precious pledge, she said, securely rest!  
These accents were her last; the creeping death  
Benumb'd her senses first, then stopp'd her breath,  
Thus she, for disobedience justly dy'd:  
The fire was justly punish'd for his pride: 750  
The youth, least guilty, suffer'd for th' offence,  
Of duty violated to his prince;  
Who, late repenting of his cruel deed,  
One common sepulchre for both decreed;  
Intomb'd the wretched pair in royal state,  
And on their monument inscrib'd their fate. 756





## THEODORE AND HONORIA.

OF all the cities in Romanian lands,  
The chief and most renown'd, Ravenna stands,  
Adorn'd in ancient times with arms and arts,  
And rich inhabitants, with generous hearts.  
But Theodore the brave, above the rest, 5  
With gifts of fortune and of nature blest'd,  
The foremost place for wealth and honour held,  
And all in feats of chivalry excell'd.

This noble youth to madness lov'd a dame  
Of high degree, Honoria was her name; 10  
Fair as the fairest, but of haughty mind,  
And fiercer than became so soft a kind.  
Proud of her birth (for equal she had none);  
The rest she scorn'd; but hated him alone:  
His gifts, his constant courtship, nothing gain'd; 15  
For she, the more he lov'd, the more disdain'd.  
He liv'd with all the pomp he could devise,  
At tilts and tournaments obtain'd the prize;  
But found no favour in his lady's eyes:  
Relentless as a rock, the lofty maid, 20  
Turn'd all to poison that he did or said:  
Nor prayers, nor tears, nor offer'd vows could move;  
The work went backward; and the more he strove  
T' advance his suit, the farther from her love.

Weary'd at length, and wanting remedy, 25  
He doubted oft, and oft resolv'd to die.  
But pride stood ready to prevent the blow,  
For who would die to gratify a foe?  
His generous mind disdain'd so mean a fate;  
That pass'd, his next endeavour was to hate. 30  
But vainer that relief than all the rest,  
The less he hop'd with more desire possess'd;  
Love stood the siege, and would not yield his breast.  
Change was the next, but change deceiv'd his care;  
He sought a fairer, but found none so fair. 35  
He would have worn her out by slow degrees,  
As men by fasting starve th'untam'd disease:  
But present love requir'd a present ease.



Looking he feeds alone his famish'd eyes,  
 Feeds lingering death, but looking not he dies. 40  
 Yet still he chose the longest way to fate,  
 Wasting at once his life and his estate.

His friends beheld, and pity'd him in vain,  
 For what advice can ease a lover's pain!  
 Absence, the best expedient they could find, 45  
 Might save the fortune, if not cure the mind:  
 This means they long propos'd, but little gain'd,  
 Yet, after much pursuit, at length obtain'd.

Hard you may think it was to give consent,  
 But struggling with his own desires he went, 50  
 With large expence, and with a pompous train,  
 Provided as to visit France and Spain,  
 Or for some distant voyage o'er the main.  
 But love had clipp'd his wings, and cut him short,  
 Confin'd within the purlieus of the court, 55  
 Three miles he went, no farther could retreat;  
 His travels ended at his country-seat:

To Chassis pleasing plains he took his way  
 There pitch'd his tents, and there resolv'd to stay.  
 The spring was in the prime; the neighb'ring grove  
 Supply'd with birds the choristers of love: 61

Music unbought, that minister'd delight  
 To morning walks, and lull'd his cares by night:  
 There he discharg'd his friends; but not th' expence  
 Of frequent treats, and proud magnificence. 65

He liv'd as kings retire, though more at large  
 From public business, yet with equal charge;  
 With house and heart still open to receive;  
 As well content as love would give him leave:  
 He would have liv'd more free; but many a guest, 70  
 Who could forsake the friend, pursued the feast.

It hapt one morning as his fancy led,  
 Before his usual hour he left his bed;  
 To walk within a lonely lawn, that stood  
 On every side furrounded by a wood: 75  
 Alone he walk'd, to please his pensive mind,  
 And sought the deepest solitude to find



'Twas in a grove of spreading pines he stray'd ;  
The winds within the quivering branches play'd,  
And dancing trees a mournful music made. 80  
The place itself was suiting to his care,  
Uncouth and savage, as the cruel fair.  
He wandered on, unknowing where he went,  
Lost in the wood, and all on love intent :  
The day already half his race had run, 85  
And summon'd him to due repast at noon,  
But love could feel no hunger but his own.

Whilst listening to the murmuring leaves he stood,  
More than a mile immers'd within the wood, 89  
At once the wind was laid ; the whispering sound  
Was dumb ; a rising earthquake rock'd the ground ;  
With deeper brown the grove was overspread ;  
A sudden horror seiz'd his giddy head,  
And his ears tinkled, and his colour fled.  
Nature was in alarm ; some danger nigh 95  
Seem'd threaten'd, though unseen to mortal eye.  
Unus'd to fear, he summon'd all his soul,  
And stood collected in himself, and whole ;  
Not long : for soon a whirlwind rose around,  
And from afar he heard a screaming sound, 100  
As of a dame distress'd, who cry'd for aid,  
And fill'd with loud laments the secret shade.

A thicket close beside the grove there stood,  
With briers and brambles chok'd, and dwarfish wood ;  
From thence the noise, which now, approaching near,  
With more distinguish'd notes invades his ear ; 106  
He rais'd his head, and saw a beauteous maid,  
With hair dishevel'd, issuing through the shade ;  
Stripp'd of her cloaths, and ev'n those parts reveal'd,  
Which modest nature keeps from sight conceal'd. 110  
Her face, her hands, her naked limbs were torn,  
With passing through the brakes, and prickly thorn ;  
Two mastiffs gaunt and grim her flight pursu'd,  
And oft their fasten'd fangs in blood imbru'd :  
Oft they came up, and pinch'd her tender side, 115  
Mercy, O mercy, heaven ! she ran, and cry'd ;



When heaven was nam'd, they loos'd their hold again,  
Then sprang she forth, they follow'd her amain.

Not far behind, a knight of swarthy face,  
High on a coal-black steed pursu'd the chace ; 120  
With flashing flames his ardent eyes were fill'd,  
And in his hand a naked sword he held :  
He cheer'd the dogs to follow her who fled,  
And vow'd revenge on her devoted head.

As Theodore was born of noble kind, 125  
The brutal action rous'd his manly mind ;  
Mov'd with unworthy usage of the maid,  
He, though unarm'd, resolv'd to give her aid.  
A sapline pine he wrench'd from out the ground,  
The readiest weapon that his fury found. 130  
Thus furnish'd for offence, he cross'd the way  
Betwixt the graceless villain and his prey.

The knight came thundering on, but, from afar,  
Thus in imperious tone forbad the war :  
Cease, Theodore, to proffer vain relief, 135  
Nor stop the vengeance of so just a grief ;  
But give me leave to seize my destin'd prey,  
And let eternal justice take the way :  
I but revenge my fate, disdain'd, betray'd,  
And suffering death for this ungrateful maid. 140

He said, at once dismounting from the steed ;  
For now the hell-hounds with superior speed  
Had reach'd the dame, and, fastening on her side,  
The ground with issuing streams of purple dy'd,  
Stood Theodore surpris'd in deadly fright, 145  
With chattering teeth, and bristling hair upright ;  
Yet arm'd with inborn worth, Whate'er, said he,  
Thou art, who know'st me better than I thee ;  
Or prove thy rightful cause, or be defy'd ;  
The spectre, fiercely staring, thus reply'd : 150

Know, Theodore, thy ancestry I claim,  
And Guido Cavalcanti was my name.  
One common fire our fathers did beget,  
My name and story some remember yet :  
Thee, then a boy, within my arms I laid, 155  
When for my sins I lov'd this haughty maid ;



Not less ador'd in life, nor serv'd by me,  
 Than proud Honoria now is lov'd by thee.  
 What did I not her stubborn heart to gain?  
 But all my vows were answer'd with disdain : 160  
 She scorn'd my sorrows, and despis'd my pain.  
 Long time I dragg'd my days in fruitless care ;  
 Then, loathing life, and plung'd in deep despair,  
 To finish my unhappy life, I fell  
 On this sharp sword, and now am damn'd in hell. 165

Short was her joy ; for soon th' insulting maid  
 By heaven's decree in this cold grave was laid.  
 And as in unrepented sin she dy'd,  
 Doom'd to the same bad place, is punish'd for her pride:  
 Because she deem'd I well deserv'd to die, 170  
 And made a merit of her cruelty.

There, then, we met ; both try'd, and both were cast,  
 And this irrevocable sentence pass'd ;

That she, whom I so long pursu'd in vain,  
 Should suffer from my hands a lingering pain : 175

Renew'd to life that she might daily die,  
 I daily doom'd to follow, she to fly ;

No more a lover, but a mortal foe,  
 I seek her life (for love is none below) :

As often as my dogs with better speed 180  
 Arrest her flight, is she to death decreed :

Then with this fatal sword, on which I dy'd,  
 I pierce her open back or tender side,

And tear that harden'd heart from out her breast, 184

Which, with her entrails, makes my hungry hounds a  
 Nor lies she long, but, as her fates ordain, [feast.

Springs up to life, and fresh to second pain,  
 Is sav'd to-day, to-morrow to be slain.

This vers'd in death, th' infernal knight relates,  
 And then for proof fulfill'd the common fates ; 190

Her heart and bowels through her back he drew,

And fed the hounds that help'd him to pursue,

Stern look'd the fiend, as frustrate of his will,

Not half suffic'd, and greedy yet to kill.

And now the soul, expiring through the wound, 195

Had left the body breathless on the ground,



When thus the grisly spectre spoke again :  
Behold the fruit of ill-rewarded pain :

As many months as I sustain'd her hate,  
So many years is she condemn'd by fate  
To daily death ; and every several place,  
Conscious of her disdain and my disgrace,  
Must witness her just punishment ; and be  
A scene of triumph and revenge to me !

200

As in this grove I took my last farewell,  
As on this very spot of earth I fell,

205

As Friday saw me die, so she my prey  
Becomes ev'n here, on this revolving day.

Thus while he spoke, the virgin from the ground  
Upstart'd fresh, already clos'd the wound,

210

And, unconcern'd for all she felt before,  
Precipitates her flight along the shore :

The hell-hounds, as ungorg'd with flesh and blood,  
Pursue their prey, and seek their wonted food :

The fiend remounts his courser, mends his pace ;  
And all the vision vanish'd from the place.

215

Long stood the noble youth oppress'd with awe,  
And stupid at the wondrous things he saw,  
Surpassing common faith, transgressing nature's law.

He would have been asleep, and wish'd to wake,  
But dreams, he knew, no long impression make,

220

Though strong at first ; if vision, to what end,  
But such as must his future state portend ?

His love the damsel, and himself the fiend.

But yet, reflecting that it could not be

225

From heaven, which cannot impious acts decree,  
Resolv'd, within himself, to shun the snare,

Which hell for his destruction did prepare ;

And, as his better genius should direct,

From an ill cause to draw a good effect.

230

Inspir'd from heaven he homeward took his way,  
Nor pall'd his new design with long delay :

But of his train a trusty servant sent

To call his friends together at his tent.

They came, and, usual salutations paid,

235

With words premeditated thus he said :



What you have often counsel'd to remove  
 My vain pursuit of unregarded love ;  
 By thrift my sinking fortune to repair,  
 Though late, yet is at last become my care : 240  
 My heart shall be my own ; my vast expence  
 Reduc'd to bounds, by timely providence ;  
 This only I require ; invite for me  
 Honoria, with her father's family,  
 Her friends and mine ; the cause I shall display, 245  
 On Friday next ; for that's th' appointed day.  
 Well pleas'd were all his friends, the task was light,  
 The father, mother, daughter they invite ;  
 Hardly the dame was drawn to this repast ;  
 But yet resolv'd, because it was the last. 250  
 The day was come, the guests invited came,  
 And, with the rest, th' inexorable dame ;  
 A feast prepar'd with riotous expence,  
 Much cost, more care, and most magnificence.  
 The place ordain'd was in that haunted grove, 255  
 Where the revenging ghost pursu'd his love :  
 The tables in a proud pavilion spread,  
 With flowers below, and tissue overhead :  
 The rest in rank, Honoria chief in place,  
 Was artfully contriv'd to set her face 260  
 To front the thicket, and behold the chace.  
 The feast was serv'd, the time so well forecast,  
 That just when the desert and fruits were plac'd,  
 The fiends alarm began ; the hollow sound  
 Sung in the leaves, the forest shook around, 265  
 Air blacken'd, roll'd the thunder, groan'd the ground.  
 Nor long before the loud laments arise,  
 Of one distress'd, and mastiffs mingled cries ;  
 And first the dame came rushing through the wood,  
 And next the famish'd hounds that sought their  
 food,  
 And grip'd her flanks, and oft essay'd their jaws in  
 blood. 271  
 Last came the felon, on his sable steed, [speed.  
 Arm'd with his naked sword, and urg'd his dogs to



She ran, and cry'd, her flight directly bent  
(A guest unbidden) to the fatal tent, 275  
The scene of death, and place ordain'd for punishment.  
Loud was the noise, aghast was every guest,  
The women shriek'd, the men forsook the feast ;  
The hounds at nearer distance hoarsely bay'd ;  
The hunter close pursu'd the visionary maid, 280  
She rent the heaven with loud laments, imploring aid.

The gallants, to protect the lady's right,  
Their faulchions brandish'd at the grisly sprite ;  
High on his stirrups he provok'd the fight.  
Then on the crowd he cast a furious look, 285  
And wither'd all their strength before he spoke :  
Back on your lives ; let be, said he, my prey,  
And let my vengeance take the destin'd way ;  
Vain are your arms, and vainer your defence,  
Against th' eternal doom of Providence ; 290  
Mine is th' ungrateful maid by heaven design'd :  
Mercy she would not give, nor mercy shall she find.  
At this the former tale again he told  
With thundering tone, and dreadful to behold :  
Sunk were their hearts with horror of the crime, 295  
Nor needed to be warn'd a second time,  
But bore each other back : some knew the face,  
And all had heard the much lamented case  
Of him who fell for love, and this the fatal place.

And now th' infernal minister advanc'd, 300  
Seiz'd the due victim, and with fury lanced  
Her back, and, piercing through her inmost heart,  
Drew backward as before th' offending part.  
The reeking entrails next he tore away,  
And to his meagre mastiffs made a prey. 305  
The pale assistants on each other star'd,  
With gaping mouths for issuing words prepar'd ;  
The still-born sounds upon the palate hung,  
And dy'd imperfect on the faltering tongue.  
The fright was general ; but the female band 310  
(A helpless train) in more confusion stand :



With horror shuddering, on a heap they run,  
Sick at the sight of hateful justice done ; [own.  
For conscience rung th' alarm, and made the case their

So, spread upon a lake with upward eye, 315  
A plump of fowl behold their foe on high ;  
They close their trembling troop ; and all attend  
On whom the fowling eagle will descend.

But most the proud Honoria fear'd th' event,  
And thought to her alone the vision sent. 320

Her guilt presents to her distracted mind  
Heaven's justice, Theodore's revengeful kind,  
And the same fate to the same sin assign'd.  
Already sees herself the monster's prey,  
And feels her heart and entrails torn away. 325

'Twas a mute scene of sorrow, mix'd with fear ;  
Still on the table lay th' unfinish'd cheer :  
The knight and hungry mastiffs stood around,  
The mangled dame lay breathless on the ground ;  
When on a sudden, re-inspir'd with breath, 330

Again she rose, again to suffer death ;  
Nor staid the hell-hounds, nor the hunter staid,  
But follow'd, as before, the flying maid :  
Th' avenger took from earth th' avenging sword,  
And mounting light as air his sable steed he spurr'd :  
The clouds dispell'd, the sky resum'd her light, 336  
And nature stood recover'd of her fright.  
But fear, the last of ills, remain'd behind,  
And horror heavy sat on every mind.

Nor Theodore encourag'd more the feast, 340  
But sternly look'd, as hatching in his breast  
Some deep designs ; which when Honoria view'd,  
The fresh impulse her former fright renew'd ;  
She thought herself the trembling dame who fled,  
And him the grisly ghost that spurr'd th' infernal steed :  
The more dismay'd, for when the guests withdrew, 346  
Their courteous host, saluting all the crew,  
Regardless pass'd her o'er ; nor grac'd with kind adieu ;  
That sting infix'd within her haughty mind  
The downfall of her empire she divin'd ; 350  
And her proud heart with secret sorrow pin'd.



Home as they went, the sad discourse renew'd  
 Of the relentless dame to death pursu'd,  
 And of the sight obscene so lately view'd.  
 None durst arraign the righteous doom she bore, 355  
 Ev'n they who pity'd most, yet blam'd her more :  
 The parallel they needed not to name,  
 But in the dead they damn'd the living dame.

At every little noise she look'd behind,  
 For still the knight was present to her mind : 360  
 And anxious oft she started on the way,  
 And thought the horseman ghost came thundering for  
 Return'd, she took her bed with little rest, [his prey  
 But in short slumbers dreamt the funeral feast :  
 Awak'd, she turn'd her side, and slept again ; 365  
 The same black vapours mounted in her brain,  
 And the same dreams return'd with double pain.

Now forc'd to wake, because afraid to sleep,  
 Her blood all fever'd, with a furious leap  
 She sprang from bed, distracted in her mind, 370  
 And fear'd, at every step, a twitching sprite behind.  
 Darkling and desperate, with a staggering pace,  
 Of death afraid, and conscious of disgrace ;  
 Fear, pride, remorse, at once her heart assail'd,  
 Pride put remorse to flight, but fear prevail'd. 375  
 Friday, the fatal day, when next it came,  
 Her soul forethought the fiend would change his game,  
 And her pursue, or Theodore be slain, [plain.  
 And two ghosts join their packs to hunt her o'er the  
 This dreadful image so possess'd her mind, 380  
 That, desperate any succour else to find,  
 She ceas'd all farther hope ; and now began  
 To make reflection on th' unhappy man.  
 Rich, brave, and young, who past expression lov'd,  
 Proof to disdain, and not to be remov'd : 385  
 Of all the men respected and admir'd,  
 Of all the dames, except herself, desir'd :  
 Why not of her, preferr'd above the rest  
 By him with knightly deeds, and open love profess'd ?  
 So had another been, where he his vows address'd.



This quell'd her pride, yet other doubts remain'd, 391  
That, once disdain'd, she might be disdain'd.

The fear was just, but greater fear prevail'd,  
Fear of her life by hellish hounds assail'd:

He took a lowering leave; but who can tell, 395  
What outward hate might inward love conceal?

Her sex's arts she knew; and why not, then,  
Might deep dissembling have a place in men?

Here hope began to dawn; resolv'd to try,  
She fix'd on this her utmost remedy: 400

Death was behind, but hard it was to die.

'Twas time enough at last on death to call,  
The precipice in sight: a shrub was all,  
That kindly stood betwixt to break the fatal fall.

One maid she had, belov'd above the rest; 405  
Secure of her, the secret she confess'd;

And now the cheerful light her fears dispell'd,  
She with no winding turns the truth conceal'd,  
But put the woman off, and stood reveal'd:

With faults confess'd commission'd her to go, 410

If pity yet had place, and reconcile her foe;  
The welcome message made, was soon receiv'd;  
'Twas to be wish'd, and hop'd, but scarce believ'd;

Fate seem'd a fair occasion to present;  
He knew the sex, and fear'd she might repent, 415  
Should he delay the moment of consent.

There yet remain'd to gain her friends (a care  
The modesty of maidens well might spare);  
But she with such a zeal the cause embrac'd  
(As women, where they will, are all in haste;) 420

The father, mother, and the kin beside,

Were overborne by fury of the tide;

With full consent of all she chang'd her state;  
Resistless in her love, as in her hate.

By her example warn'd, the rest beware; 425

More easy, less imperious, were the fair;

And that one hunting, which the devil design'd  
For one fair female, lost him half the kind. 428



# CYMON AND IPHIGENIA.

POETA LOQUITUR.

**O**LD as I am, for ladies love unfit,  
The power of beauty I remember yet.  
Which once inflam'd my soul, and still inspires my wit.  
If love be folly, the severe divine  
Has felt that folly, though he censures mine; 5  
Pollutes the pleasures of a chaste embrace,  
Acts what I write, and propagates in grace,  
With riotous excess, a priestly race.  
Suppose him free, and that I forge th' offence,  
He shew'd the way, perverting first my sense: 10  
In malice witty, and with venom fraught,  
He makes me speak the things I never thought.  
Compute the gains of his ungovern'd zeal;  
Ill suits his cloth the praise of railing well.  
The world will think that what we loosely write, 15  
Though now arraing'd, he read with some delight;  
Because he seems to chew the cud again,  
When his broad comment makes the text too plain;  
And teaches more in one explaining page,  
Than all the double meanings of the stage. 20  
What needs he paraphrase on what we mean?  
We were at worst but wanton; he's obscene.  
I not my fellows nor myself excuse;  
But love's the subject of the comic Muse;  
Nor can we write without it, nor would you 25  
A tale of only dry instruction view;  
Nor love is always of a vicious kind,  
But oft to virtuous acts inflames the mind,  
Awakes the sleepy vigour of the soul,  
And, brushing o'er, adds motion to the pool. 30  
Love, studious how to please, improves our parts  
With polish'd manners, and adorns with arts.  
Love first invented verse, and form'd the rhyme,  
The motion measur'd, harmoniz'd the chime;  
To liberal acts enlarg'd the narrow-soul'd, 35  
Softened the fierce, and made the coward bold:  
The world, when waste, he peopled with increase,  
And warring nations reconcil'd in peace.



Ormond, the first, and all the fair may find,  
In this one legend, to their fame design'd, 40  
When beauty fires the blood, how love exalts the mind.

In that sweet isle where Venus keeps her court,  
And every grace, and all the loves, resort;  
Where either sex is form'd of softer earth,  
And takes the bent of pleasure from her birth; 45  
There liv'd a Cyprian lord, above the rest  
Wise, wealthy, with a numerous issue blest'd.

But as no gift of fortune is sincere,  
Was only wanting in a worthy heir;  
His eldest-born, a goodly youth to view, 50  
Excell'd the rest in shape, and outward shew,  
Fair, tall, his limbs with due proportion join'd,  
But of a heavy, dull, degenerate mind.  
His soul bely'd the features of his face;  
Beauty was there, but beauty in disgrace. 55  
A clownish mien, a voice with rustic sound,  
And stupid eyes that ever lov'd the ground.  
He look'd like Nature's error, as the mind  
And body were not of a piece design'd,  
But made for two, and by mistake in one were join'd. 60

The ruling rod, the father's forming care,  
Were exercis'd in vain on wit's despair;  
The more inform'd, the less he understood,  
And deeper sunk by floundering in the mud.  
Now scorn'd of all, and grown the public shame, 65  
The people from Galesus chang'd his name,  
And Cymon call'd, which signifies a brute;  
So well his name did with his nature suit.

His father, when he found his labour lost,  
And care employ'd that answer'd not the cost, 70  
Chose an ungrateful object to remove,  
And loath'd to see what Nature made him love;  
So to his country farm the fool confin'd;  
Rude work well suited with a rustic mind.  
Thus to the wilds the sturdy Cymon went, 75  
A squire among the swains, and pleas'd with banish-  
His corn and cattle were his only care, [ment.  
And his supreme delight, a country fair.



It happen'd on a summer's holiday,  
 That to the green-wood shade he took his way ; 80  
 For Cymon shunn'd the church, and us'd not much to  
 His quarter staff, which he could ne'er forsake, [pray.  
 Hung half before, and half behind his back.  
 He trudg'd along, unknowing what he sought,  
 And whistled as he went for want of thought. 85

By chance conducted, or by thirst constrain'd,  
 The deep recesses of the grove he gain'd ;  
 Where, in a plain defended by the wood,  
 Crept through the matted grass a crystal flood,  
 By which an alabaster fountain stood : 90  
 And on the margin of the fount was laid  
 (Attended by her slaves) a sleeping maid.  
 Like Dian and her nymphs, when tir'd with sport,  
 To rest by cool Eurotas they resort :  
 The dame herself the goddess well express'd, 95  
 Not more distinguish'd by her purple vest,  
 Than by the charming features of her face,  
 And ev'n in slumber a superior grace :  
 Her comely limbs compos'd with decent care,  
 Her body shaded with a slight cymar ; 100  
 Her bosom to the view was only bare :  
 Where two beginning paps were scarcely spy'd,  
 For yet their places were but signify'd :  
 The fanning wind upon her bosom blows,  
 To meet the fanning wind the bosom rose ; 105  
 The fanning wind, and purling streams, continue her re-  
 pose.  
 The fool of nature stood with stupid eyes,  
 And gaping mouth, that testify'd surprise,  
 Fix'd on her face, nor could remove his sight,  
 New as he was to love, and novice to delight : 110  
 Long mute he stood, and leaning on his staff,  
 His wonder witness'd with an idiot laugh ;  
 Then would have spoke, but by his glimmering sense  
 First found his want of words, and fear'd offence :  
 Doubted for what he was he should be known, 115  
 By his clown accent, and his country tone.  
 Through the rude chaos thus the running light  
 Shot the first ray that pierc'd the native night :



Then day and darkness in the mass were mix'd :  
 Till gather'd in a globe the beams were fix'd. 120  
 Last shone the sun, who, radiant in his sphere,  
 Illumin'd heav'n and earth, and roll'd around the year.  
 So reason in his brutal soul began,  
 Love made him first suspect he was a man ;  
 Love made him doubt his broad barbarian sound ; 125  
 By love his want of words and wit he found ;  
 That sense of want prepar'd the future way  
 To knowledge, and disclos'd the promise of a day.

What not his father's care, nor tutor's art,  
 Could plant with pains in his unpolish'd heart, 130  
 The best instructor, love, at once inspir'd,  
 As barren grounds to fruitfulness are fir'd :  
 Love taught him shame ; and shame, with love at strife,  
 Soon taught the sweet civilities of life ;  
 His gross material soul at once could find 135  
 Somewhat in her excelling all her kind :  
 Exciting a desire till then unknown,  
 Somewhat unfound, or found in her alone.  
 This made the first impression on his mind,  
 Above, but just above, the brutal kind. 140  
 For beasts can like, but not distinguish too,  
 Nor their own liking by reflection know ;  
 Nor why they like or this or t' other face,  
 Or judge of this or that peculiar grace ;  
 But love in gross, and stupidly admire : 145  
 As flies, allur'd by light, approach the fire.  
 Thus our man-beast, advancing by degrees,  
 First likes the whole, then separates what he sees ;  
 On several parts a several praise bestows,  
 The ruby lips, the well-proportion'd nose, 150  
 The snowy skin, and raven-glossy hair,  
 The dimpled cheek, and forehead rising fair,  
 And, ev'n in sleep itself, a smiling air.  
 From thence his eyes descending view'd the rest,  
 Her plump round arms, white hands, and heaving breast.  
 Long on the last he dwelt, though every part 156  
 A pointed arrow sped to pierce his heart.



Thus in a trice a judge of beauty grown,  
(A judge erected from a country clown)  
He long'd to see her eyes, in slumber hid, 160  
And wish'd his own could pierce within the lid :  
He would have wak'd her, but restrain'd his thought,  
And love new-born the first good manners taught.  
And awful fear his ardent wish withstood,  
Nor durst disturb the goddess of the wood. 165  
For such she seem'd by her celestial face,  
Excelling all the rest of human race.  
And things divine, by common sense he knew,  
Must be devoutly seen, at distant view :  
So checking his desire, with trembling heart 170  
Gazing he stood, nor would nor could depart ;  
Fix'd as a pilgrim wilder'd in his way,  
Who dares not stir by night, for fear to stray,  
But stands with awful eyes, to watch the dawn of day.

At length awaking, Iphigene the fair 175  
(So was the beauty call'd who caus'd his care)  
Unclos'd her eyes, and double day reveal'd,  
While those of all her slaves in sleep were seal'd.  
The flustering cudden, propp'd upon his staff,  
Stood ready gaping with a grinning laugh, 180  
To welcome her awake ; nor durst begin  
To speak, but wisely kept the fool within.  
Then she, What makes you, Cymon, here alone ?  
(For Cymon's name was round the country known,  
Because descended of a noble race, 185  
And for a soul ill sort'd with his face.)

But still the sot stood silent with surprise,  
With fix'd regard on her new-open'd eyes,  
And in his breast receiv'd th' invenom'd dart,  
A tickling pain that pleas'd amid the smart. 190  
But, conscious of her form, with quick distrust  
She saw his sparkling eyes, and fear'd his brutal lust :  
This to prevent, she wak'd her sleepy crew,  
And, rising hasty, took a short adieu.

Then Cymon first his rustic voice essay'd, 195  
With proffered service to the parting maid



To see her safe ; his hand she long deny'd,  
 But took at length, asham'd of such a guide.  
 So Cymon led her home, and leaving there,  
 No more would to his country clowns repair, 200  
 But sought his father's house with better mind,  
 Refusing in the farm to be confin'd.

The father wonder'd at the son's return,  
 And knew not whether to rejoice or mourn ;  
 But doubtfully receiv'd, expecting still 205  
 To learn the secret causes of his alter'd will.  
 Nor was he long delay'd : the first request  
 He made, was like his brothers to be dress'd,  
 And, as his birth requir'd, above the rest.

With ease his suit was granted by his fire, 210  
 Distinguishing his heir by rich attire,  
 His body thus adorn'd, he next design'd  
 With liberal arts to cultivate his mind :  
 He sought a tutor of his own accord,  
 And study'd lessons he before abhorr'd. 215

Thus the man-child advanc'd, and learn'd so fast,  
 That in short time his equals he surpass'd :  
 His brutal manners from his breast exil'd,  
 His mien he fashion'd, and his tongue he fil'd ;  
 In every exercise of all admir'd, 220  
 He seem'd, nor only seem'd, but was inspir'd :  
 Inspir'd by love, whose business is to please ;  
 He rode, he fenc'd, he mov'd with graceful ease,  
 More fam'd for sense, for courtly carriage more,  
 Than for his brutal folly known before. 225

What then of alter'd Cymon shall we say,  
 But that the fire which chok'd in ashes lay,  
 A load too heavy for his soul to move,  
 Was upward blown below, and brush'd away by love ;  
 Love made an active progress through his mind, 230  
 The dusky parts he clear'd, the gross refin'd,  
 The drowsy wak'd ; and as he went impress'd  
 The Maker's image on the human breast.  
 Thus was the man amended by desire,  
 And though he lov'd perhaps with too much fire, 235



His father all his faults with reason scann'd,  
 And lik'd an error of the better hand;  
 Excus'd th' excess of passion in his mind,  
 By flames too fierce, perhaps too much refin'd:  
 So Cymon, since his fire indulg'd his will, 240  
 Impetuous lov'd, and would be Cymon still:  
 Galefus he disown'd, and chose to bear,  
 The name of fool confirm'd, and bishop'd by the fair.  
 To Cipseus by his friends his suit he mov'd,  
 Cipseus, the father of the fair, he lov'd: 245  
 But he was pre-engag'd by former ties,  
 While Cymon was endeavouring to be wise:  
 And Iphigene, oblig'd by former vows,  
 Had given her faith to wed a foreign spouse:  
 Her fire and she to Rhodian Pasimond, 250  
 Though both repenting, were by promise bound.  
 Nor could retract; and thus, as fate decreed,  
 Though better lov'd, he spoke too late to speed.

The doom was past, the ship already sent  
 Did all his tardy diligence prevent: 255  
 Sigh'd to herself the fair unhappy maid,  
 While stormy Cymon thus in secret said:  
 The time is come for Iphigene to find  
 The miracle she wrought upon my mind:  
 Her charms have made me man, her ravish'd love 260  
 In rank shall place me with the blest above.  
 For mine by love, by force she shall be mine,  
 Or death, if force should fail, shall finish my design.  
 Resolv'd, he said; and rigg'd with speedy care  
 A vessel strong, and well equipp'd for war. 265  
 The secret ship with chosen friends he stor'd;  
 And, bent to die or conquer, went aboard.  
 Ambush'd he lay behind the Cyprian shore,  
 Waiting the sail that all his wishes bore;  
 Nor long expected, for the following tide 270  
 Sent out the hostile ship and beauteous bride.

To Rhodes the rival bark directly steer'd,  
 When Cymon sudden at her back appear'd,  
 And stopp'd her flight; then, standing on his prow,  
 In haughty terms he thus defy'd the foe; 275



Or strike your sails at summons, or prepare  
To prove the last extremities of war.  
Thus warn'd, the Rhodians for the fight provide ;  
Already were the vessels side by side, 279  
These obstinate to save, and those to seize the bride.  
But Cymon soon his crooked grapples cast,  
Which with tenacious hold his foes embrac'd, [pass'd.  
And, arm'd with sword and shield, amid the press he  
Fierce was the fight, but, hastening to his prey,  
By force the furious lover freed his way : 285  
Himself alone dispers'd the Rhodian crew,  
The weak disdain'd, the valiant overthrew ;  
Cheap conquest for his following friends remain'd,  
He reap'd the field, and they but only glean'd.

His victory confess'd, the foes retreat, 290  
And cast the weapons at the victor's feet.  
Whom thus he cheer'd : O Rhodian youth, I fought  
For love alone, nor other booty fought :  
Your lives are safe ; your vessel I resign ;  
Yours be your own, restoring what is mine : 295  
In Iphigene I claim my rightful due,  
Robb'd by my rival, and detain'd by you :  
Your Pasimond a lawless bargain drove,  
The parent could not sell the daughter's love ;  
Or, if he could, my love disdains the laws, 300  
And, like a king, by conquest, gains his cause :  
Where arms take place, all other pleas are vain,  
Love taught me force, and force shall love maintain,  
You, what by strength you could not keep, release,  
And at an easy ransom buy your peace. 305

Fear on the conquer'd side soon sign'd th' accord,  
And Iphigene to Cymon was restor'd :  
While to his arms the blushing bride he took ;  
To seeming sadness she compos'd her look ;  
As if by force subjected to his will, 310  
Though pleas'd, dissembling, and a woman still.  
And, for she wept, he wip'd her falling tears ;  
And pray'd her to dismiss her empty fears,  
For yours I am, he said, and has deserv'd  
Your love much better whom so long I serv'd, 315



Than he to whom your formal farther ty'd  
 Your vows, and sold a slave, not sent a bride.  
 Thus while he spoke, he seiz'd the willing prey,  
 As Paris bore the Spartan spouse away.  
 Faintly she scream'd, and ev'n her eyes confess'd 320  
 She rather would be thought, than was distress'd.  
 Who now exults but Cymon in his mind?  
 Vain hopes and empty joys of human kind,  
 Proud of the present, to the future blind!  
 Secure of fate, while Cymon plows the sea, 325  
 And steers to Candy with his conquer'd prey,  
 Scarce the third glass of measur'd hours was run,  
 When like a fiery meteor sunk the sun:  
 The promise of a storm; the shifting gales  
 Forsake by fits, and fill the flagging sails; 330  
 Hoarse murmurs of the main from far were heard,  
 And night came on, not by degrees prepar'd,  
 But all at once; at once the winds arise,  
 The thunders roll, the forked light'ning flies.  
 In vain the master issues out commands, 335  
 In vain the trembling sailors ply their hands:  
 The tempest unforeseen prevents their care,  
 And from the first they labour in despair.  
 The giddy ship betwixt the winds and tides,  
 Forc'd back, and forwards, in a circle rides, 340  
 Stunn'd with the different blows; then shoots amain,  
 Till, counterbuff'd, she stops, and sleeps again.  
 Not more aghast the proud archangel fell,  
 Plung'd from the height of heaven to deepest hell,  
 Than stood the lover of his love possess'd, 345  
 Now curs'd the more, the more he had been blest'd;  
 More anxious for her danger than his own,  
 Death he defies; but would be lost alone.  
 Sad Iphigene, to womanish complaints,  
 Adds pious prayers, and wearies all the saints; 350  
 Ev'n if she could, her love she would repent,  
 But, since she cannot, dreads the punishment;  
 Her forfeit faith and Pasimond betray'd,  
 Are ever present, and her crime upbraid.



She blames herself, nor blames her lover less,  
Augments her anger, as her fears increase:  
From her own back the burden would remove,  
And lays the load on his ungovern'd love,  
Which interposing durst, in heav'ns despite,  
Invade, and violate another's right: 360  
The powers incens'd a while deferr'd his pain,  
And made him master of his vows in vain:  
But soon they punish'd his presumptuous pride;  
That for his daring enterprise she dy'd;  
Who rather not resisted, than comply'd. 365

Then, impotent of mind, with alter'd sense,  
She hugg'd th' offender, and forgave th' offence,  
Sex to the last, mean time with sails declin'd  
The wandering vessel drove before the wind:  
Toss'd and retoss'd, aloft, and then below, 370  
Nor port they seek, nor certain course they know,  
But every moment wait the coming blow.  
Thus blindly driven, by breaking day they view'd  
The land before them, and their fears renew'd;  
The land was welcome, but the tempest bore 375  
The threaten'd ship against a rocky shore.

A winding bay was near; to this they bent,  
And just escap'd; their force already spent;  
Secure from storms, and panting from the sea,  
The land unknown at leisure they survey; 380  
And saw (but soon their sickly sight withdrew)  
The rising towers of Rhodes at distant view;  
And curs'd the hostile shore of Pasimond,  
Sav'd from the seas, and shipwreck'd on the ground.

The frightened sailors try'd their strength in vain 385  
To turn the stern, and tempt the stormy main;  
But the stiff wind withstood the labouring oar,  
And forc'd them forward on the fatal shore!  
The crooked keel now bites the Rhodian strand,  
And the ship moor'd constrains the crew to land: 390  
Yet still they might be safe, because unknown,  
But, as ill fortune seldom comes alone,  
The vessel they dismiss'd was driv'n before,  
Already shelter'd on their native shore; 394



Known each, they know ; but each with change of  
 The vanquish'd side exults ; the victors fear ; [cheer ;  
 Not them but theirs, made prisoners e'er they fight,  
 Despairing conquest, and depriv'd of flight.

The country rings around with loud alarms,  
 And raw in fields the rude militia swarms ; 400  
 Mouths without hands, maintain'd at vast expence,  
 In peace a charge, in war a weak defence :  
 Stout once a month they march, a blustering band,  
 And ever, but in times of need, at hand ;  
 This was the morn when, issuing on the guard, 405  
 Drawn up in rank and file they stood prepar'd  
 Of seeming arms to make a short essay,  
 Then hasten to be drunk, the business of the day.

The cowards would have fled, but that they knew  
 Themselves so many, and their foes so few ; 410  
 But, crowding on, the last the first impel ?  
 Till overborn with weight the Cyprians fell,  
 Cymon enslav'd, who first the war begun,  
 And Iphigene once more is lost and won.

Deep in a dungeon was the captive cast, 415  
 Depriv'd of day, and held in fetters fast :  
 His life was only spar'd at their request,  
 Whom taken he so nobly had releas'd :  
 But Iphigenia was the ladies' care,  
 Each in their turn address'd to treat the fair ; 420  
 While Pasimond and his the nuptial feast prepare.

Her secret soul to Cymon was inclin'd,  
 But she must suffer what her fates assign'd,  
 So passive is the church of womankind.  
 What worse to Cymon could his fortune deal, 425  
 Roll'd to the lowest spoke of all her wheel ?  
 It rested to dismiss the downward weight,  
 Or raise him upward to his former height,  
 The latter pleas'd ; and love (concern'd the most)  
 Prepar'd th' amends, for what by love he lost. 430

The sire of Pasimond had left a son,  
 Though younger, yet for courage early known,  
 Ormilda call'd, to whom by promise ty'd,  
 A Rhodian beauty was the destin'd bride.



Cassandra was her name, above the rest  
Renown'd for birth, with fortune amply blest'd.  
Lyfimachus, who rul'd the Rhodian state,  
Was then by choice their annual magistrate ;  
He lov'd Cassandra too with equal fire,  
But fortune had not favour'd his desire ;  
Cross'd by her friends, by her not disapprov'd,  
Nor yet preferr'd, or like Ormisda lov'd ;  
So stood th' affair : some little hope remain'd,  
That, should his rival chance to lose, he gain'd.  
Mean time young Pasimond his marriage press'd, 445  
Ordain'd the nuptial day, prepar'd the feast ;  
And frugally resolv'd (the charge to shun,  
Which would be double should he wed alone)  
To join his brother's bridal with his own.

Lyfimachus, oppress'd with mortal grief, 450  
Receiv'd the news, and study'd quick relief :  
The fatal day approach'd ; if force were us'd,  
The magistrate his public trust abus'd ;  
To justice liable, as law requir'd ;  
For, when his office ceas'd, his power expir'd : 455  
While power remain'd, the means were in his hand  
By force to seize, and then forsake the land :  
Betwixt extremes he knew not how to move,  
A slave to fame, but, more a slave to love :  
Restraining others, yet himself not free, 460  
Made impotent by power, debas'd by dignity.  
Both sides he weigh'd : but, after much debate,  
The man prevail'd above the magistrate.

Love never fails to master what he finds,  
But works a different way in different minds, 465  
The fool enlightens, and the wise he blinds.  
This youth, proposing to possess and 'scape,  
Began in murder, to conclude in rape :  
Unprais'd by me, though heaven sometimes may blest  
An impious act with undeserv'd success ; 470  
The great it seems are privileged alone  
To punish all injustice but their own.



But here I stop, not daring to proceed,  
 Yet blush to flatter an unrighteous deed :  
 For crimes are but permitted, not decreed. 475

Resolv'd on force, his wit the prætor bent,  
 To find the means that might secure th' event ;  
 Nor long he labour'd, for his lucky thought  
 In captive Cymon found the friend he fought ;  
 Th' example pleas'd : the cause and crime the same ;  
 An injur'd lover, and a ravish'd dame. 481

How much he durst he knew by what he dar'd,  
 The less he had to lose, the less he car'd,  
 To manage loathsome life when love was the reward.

This ponder'd well, and fix'd on his intent, 485  
 In depth of night he for the prisoner sent ;  
 In secret sent, the public view to shun,  
 Then with a sober smile he thus begun.

The powers above, who bounteously bestow  
 Their gifts and graces on mankind below, 490  
 Yet prove our merit first, nor blindly give  
 To such as are not worthy to receive :

For valour and for virtue they provide  
 Their due reward, but first they must be try'd ;  
 These fruitful seeds within your mind they sow'd ; 495  
 'Twas yours t' improve the talent they bestow'd :  
 They gave you to be born of noble kind,  
 They gave you love to lighten up your mind,  
 And purge the grosser parts ; they gave you care  
 To please, and courage to deserve the fair, 500

Thus far they try'd you, and by proof they found  
 The grain entrusted in a grateful ground :  
 But still the great experiment remain'd,  
 They suffer'd you to lose the prize you gain'd ;  
 That you might learn the gift was theirs alone : 505  
 And when restor'd, to them the blessing own.

Restor'd it soon will be ; the means prepar'd,  
 The difficulty smooth'd, the danger shar'd :  
 Be but yourself, the care to me resign,  
 Then Iphigene is yours, Cassandra mine. 510  
 Your rival Pasimond pursues your life,  
 Impatient to revenge his ravish'd wife,



But yet not his ; to-morrow is behind,  
And love our fortunes in one band has join'd :  
Two brothers are our foes, Ormisda mine, 515  
As much declar'd as Pasimond is thine :  
To-morrow must their common vows be ty'd :  
With love to friend, and fortune for our guide,  
Let both resolve to die, or each redeem a bride.

Right I have none, nor hast thou much to plead :  
'Tis force, when done, must justify the deed : 521  
Our task perform'd, we next prepare for flight :  
And let the losers talk in vain of right :  
We with the fair will sail before the wind,  
If they are griev'd, I leave the laws behind. 525  
Speak thy resolves ; if now thy courage droop,  
Despair in prison, and abandon hope :  
But if thou dar'st in arms thy love regain  
(For liberty without thy love were vain) ;  
Then second my design to seize the prey, 530  
Or lead to second rape, for well thou know'st the way.

Said Cymon, overjoy'd, do thou propose  
The means to fight, and only shew the foes ;  
For from the first, when love had fir'd my mind,  
Resolv'd, I left the care of life behind. 535

To this the bold Lyfmachus reply'd,  
Let heaven be neuter, and the sword decide ;  
The spousals are prepar'd, already play  
The minstrels, and provoke the tardy day :  
By this the brides are wak'd, their grooms are dress'd ;  
All Rhodes is summon'd to the nuptial feast, 541  
All but myself the sole unbidden guest.  
Unbidden though I am, I will be there,  
And, join'd by thee, intend to joy the fair.

Now hear the rest ; when day resigns the light, 545  
And cheerful torches gild the jolly night,  
Be ready at my call, my chosen few  
With arms administer'd shall aid thy crew.  
Then entering unexpected will we seize  
Our destin'd prey, from men dissolv'd in ease ; 550  
By wine disabled, unprepar'd for fight :  
And hastening to the seas, suborn our flight :



The seas are ours, for I command the fort,  
 A ship well mann'd expects us in the port :  
 If they, or if their friends, the prize contest, 555  
 Death shall attend the man who dares resist.

It pleas'd ! the prisoner to his hold retir'd,  
 His troop with equal emulation fir'd,  
 All fix'd to fight, and all their wonted work requir'd.  
 The sun arose ; the streets were throng'd around, 560  
 The palace open'd, and the posts were crown'd.  
 The double bridegroom at the door attends  
 Th' expected spouse, and entertains the friends :  
 They meet, they lead to church, the priests invoke  
 The powers, and feed the flames with fragrant smoke,  
 This done, they feast, and at the close of night 566  
 By kindled torches vary their delight,  
 These lead the lively dance, and those the brimming  
 bowls invite,

Now, at th' appointed place and hour assigned  
 With souls resolv'd the ravishers were join'd : 570  
 Three bands are form'd ; the first is sent before,  
 To favour the retreat, and guard the shore ;  
 The second at the palace-gate is plac'd,  
 And up the lofty stairs ascend the last :  
 A peaceful troop they seem with shining vests, 575  
 But coats of mail beneath secure their breasts.

Dauntless they enter, Cymon at their head,  
 And find the feast renew'd, the table spread :  
 Sweet voices, mix'd with instrumental sounds,  
 Ascend the vaulted roof, the vaulted roof rebounds.  
 When like the harpies rushing through the hall 581  
 The sudden troop appears, the tables fall,  
 Their smoaking load is on the pavement thrown ;  
 Each ravisher prepares to seize his own ;  
 The brides, invaded with a rude embrace, 585  
 Shriek out for aid, confusion fills the place.  
 Quick to redeem the prey their plighted lords  
 Advance, the palace gleams with shining swords.

But late is all defence, and succour vain ;  
 The rape is made, the ravishers remain : 590



Two sturdy slaves were only sent before  
To bear the purchas'd prize in safety to the shore,  
The troop retires, the lovers close the rear,  
With forward faces not confessing fear : 594  
Backward they move, but scorn their pace to mend ;  
Then seek the stairs, and with slow haste descend.

Fierce Pasimond, their passage to prevent,  
Thrust full on Cymon's back in his descent,  
The blade return'd unbath'd, and to the handle bent.  
Stout Cymon soon remounts, and cleft in two 600  
His rival's head with one descending blow :

And as the next in rank Ormisda stood,  
He turn'd the point ; the sword inur'd to blood,  
Bor'd his unguarded breast, which pour'd a purple flood.  
With vow'd revenge the gathering crowd pursues,  
The ravishers turn head, the fight renews ; 606

The hall is heap'd with corpse ; the sprinkled gore  
Besmears the walls, and floats the marble floor.  
Dispers'd at length the drunken squadron flies,  
The victors to their vessel bear the prize ; 610

And hear behind loud groans, and lamentable cries.  
The crew with merry shouts their anchors weigh,  
Then ply their oars, and brush the buxom sea,  
While troops of gather'd Rhodians crowd the quay.  
What should the people do when left alone ? 615

The governor and government are gone.  
The public wealth to foreign parts convey'd ;  
Some troops disbanded, and the rest unpaid.  
Rhodes is the sovereign of the sea no more ;  
Their ships unrigg'd, and spent their naval store ; 620

They neither could defend, nor can pursue,  
But grinn'd their teeth, and cast a helpless view :  
In vain with darts a distant war they try,  
Short, and more short, the missive weapons fly.  
Meanwhile the ravishers their crimes enjoy, 625

And flying sails and sweeping oars employ :  
The cliffs of Rhodes in little space are lost,  
The isle they seek ; nor Jove denies his coast.  
In safety landed on the Candian shore,  
With generous wines their spirits they restore : 630



There Cynon with his Rhodian friend resides,  
Both court, and wed at once, the willing brides.  
A war ensues, the Cretans own their cause,  
Stiff to defend their hospitable laws :  
Both parties lose by turns ; and neither wins, 635  
Till peace propounded by a truce begins.  
The kindred of the slain forgive the deed,  
But a short exile must for shew precede :  
The term expir'd, from Candia they remove :  
And happy each, at home, enjoys his love. 640





# THE ART OF POETRY.\*

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**T**HIS translation of Monsieur Boileau's Art of Poetry was made in the year 1680, by Sir William Soame, of Suffolk, Baronet; who being very intimately acquainted with Mr. Dryden, desired his revision of it. I saw the manuscript lie in Mr. Dryden's hands for above six months, who made very considerable alterations in it, particularly the beginning of the fourth Canto: and it being his opinion that it would be better to apply the poem to English writers, than keep to the French names, as it was first translated, Sir William desired he would take the pains to make that alteration; and accordingly that was entirely done by Mr. Dryden.

The poem was first published in the year 1683; Sir William was after sent ambassador to Constantinople, in the reign of King James, but died in the voyage.

J. TONSON.

\* At the commencement of this work, we proposed to publish the poems of Dryden only; but, finding that our great author had revised, corrected, altered, and improved the following poem so essentially, that it may be considered almost as his own; we have been induced to give it a place among his works, and presume it will meet the approbation of our readers.





# THE ART OF POETRY.

## CANTO I.

**R**ASH author, 'tis a vain presumptuous crime,  
To undertake the sacred art of rhyme ;  
If at thy birth the stars that rul'd thy sense  
Shone not with a poetic influence ;  
In thy strait genius thou wilt still be bound,  
Find Phœbus deaf, and Pegasus unsound. 5

You then that burn with the desire to try  
The dangerous course of charming poetry ;  
Forbear in fruitless verse to lose your time,  
Or take for genius the desire of rhyme : 10  
Fear the allurements of a spacious bait,  
And well consider your own force and weight.

Nature abounds in wits of every kind,  
And for each author can a talent find :  
One may in verse describe an amorous flame, 15  
Another sharpen a short epigram :  
Waller a hero's mighty acts extol,  
Spenser sing Rosalind in pastoral :  
But authors that themselves too much esteem,  
Lose their own genius, and mistake their theme ; 20  
Thus in times past Dubartas vainly writ,  
Allaying sacred truth with trifling wit,  
Impertinently, and without delight,  
Describ'd the Israelites triumphant flight,  
And following Moses o'er the sandy plain, 25  
Perish'd with Pharaoh in th' Arabian main.

Whate'er you write of pleasant or sublime,  
Always let sense accompany your rhyme :  
Falsely they seem each other to oppose ;  
Rhyme must be made with reason's laws to close : 30  
And when to conquer her you bend your force,  
The mind will triumph in the noble course ;  
To reason's yoke she quickly will incline,  
Which, far from hurting, renders her divine :  
But if neglected, will as eas'ly stray, 35  
And master reason which she should obey.



Love reason then ; and let whate'er you write  
Borrow from her its beauty, force, and light.  
Most writers mounted on a resty muse,  
Extravagant and senseless objects choose ; 40  
They think they err, if in their verse they fall  
On any thought that's plain or natural :  
Fly this excess, and let Italians be  
Vain authors of false glittering poetry.  
All ought to aim at sense ; but most in vain 45  
Strive the hard pass and slippery path to gain :  
You drown, if to the right or left you stray ;  
Reason to go has often but one way.  
Sometimes an author, fond of his own thought,  
Pursues its objects till 'tis over-wrought : 50  
If he describes a house, he shews the face,  
And after walks you round from place to place ;  
Here is a vista, there the doors unfold,  
Balconies here are ballasted with gold ;  
Then counts the rounds and ovals in the halls, 55  
“ The festoons, friezes, and the astragals : ”  
Tir'd with his tedious pomp, away I run,  
And skipp'd o'er twenty pages to be gone.  
Of such descriptions the vain folly see,  
And shun their barren superfluity. 60  
All that is needless carefully avoid ;  
The mind once satisfy'd is quickly cloy'd :  
He cannot write who knows not to give o'er ;  
To mend one fault he makes a hundred more :  
A verse was weak ; you turn it, much too strong, 65  
And grow obscure for fear you should be long.  
Some are not gaudy, but are flat and dry ;  
Not to be low, another soars too high.  
Would you of every one deserve the praise ?  
In writing vary your discourse and phrase ; 70  
A frozen style that neither ebbs nor flows,  
Instead of pleasing, makes us gape and doze.  
Those tedious authors are esteem'd by none,  
Who tire us, humming the same heavy tone.  
Happy who in his verse can gently steer, 75  
From grave to light, from pleasant to severe ;



His works will be admir'd wherever found,  
 And oft with buyers will be compass'd round.  
 In all you write be neither low nor vile :  
 The meanest theme may have a proper style.

80

The dull burlesque appear'd with impudence,  
 And pleas'd by novelty in spite of sense.  
 All, except trivial points, grew out of date;  
 Parnassus spoke the cant of Billingsgate :  
 Boundless and mad, disorder'd rhyme was seen :

85

Disguis'd Apollo chang'd to Harlequin.  
 This plague, which first in country towns began,  
 Cities and kingdoms quickly over-ran :

The dullest scribblers some admirers found,  
 And the Mock Tempest was awhile renown'd :

90

But this low stuff the town at last despis'd,  
 And scorn'd the folly that they once had priz'd ;  
 Distinguish'd dull from natural and plain,  
 And left the villages to Fleckno's reign.

Let not so mean a style your Muse debase ;  
 But learn from Butler the buffooning grace ;  
 And let burlesque in ballads be employ'd ;

95

Yet noisy bombast carefully avoid,  
 Nor think to raise, though on Pharsalia's plain,  
 " Millions of mourning mountains of the slain : "

100

Nor with Dubartas bridle up the floods,  
 And periwig with wool the baldpate woods.  
 Choose a just style, be brave without constraint,  
 Great without pride, and lovely without paint :

Write what your reader may be pleas'd to hear ;

105

And for the measure have a careful ear.  
 On easy numbers fix your happy choice :  
 Of jarring sounds avoid the odious noise :  
 The fullest verse and the most labour'd sense,  
 Displease us, if the ear once take offence.

110

Our ancient verse, as homely as the times,  
 Was rude, unmeasur'd, only tagg'd with rhymes ;  
 Number and cadence that have since been shewn,  
 To those unpolish'd writers were unknown.

Fairfax was he, who, in that darker age,  
 By his just rules restrain'd poetic rage ;

115



Spenser did next in pastorals excel,  
And taught the nobler art of writing well ;  
To stricter rules the stanza did restrain,  
And found for poetry a richer vein. 120  
Then Davenant came, who, with new-found art,  
Chang'd all, spoil'd all, and had his way apart ;  
His haughty Muse all others did despise,  
And thought in triumph to bear off the prize,  
Till the sharp-sighted critics of the times 125  
In their Mock-Gondibert expos'd his rhymes ;  
The laurels he pretended did refuse,  
And dash'd the hopes of his aspiring Muse.  
This headstrong writer falling from on high,  
Made following authors take less liberty. 130  
Waller came last, but was the first whose art,  
Just weight and measure did to verse impart ;  
That of a well-plac'd word could teach the force,  
And shew'd for poetry a nobler course :  
His happy genius did our tongue refine, 135  
And easy words with pleasing numbers join :  
His verses to good method did apply,  
And chang'd hard discord to soft harmony.  
All own'd his laws ; which, long approv'd and try'd,  
To present authors now may be a guide. 140  
Tread boldly in his steps, secure from fear,  
And be, like him, in your expressions clear.  
If in your verse you drag, and sense delay,  
My patience tires, my fancy goes astray ;  
And from your vain discourse I turn my mind, 145  
Nor search an author troublesome to find.  
There is a kind of writer pleas'd with sound,  
Whose fustian head with clouds is compass'd round,  
No reason can disperse them with its light,  
Learn then to think e'er you pretend to write. 150  
As your idea's clear, or else obscure,  
Th' expression follows perfect or impure :  
What we conceive with ease we can express ;  
Words to the notions flow with readiness.  
Observe the language well in all you write, 155  
And swerve not from it in your



The smoothest verse and the exactest sense  
Displease us, if ill English give offence ;  
A barbarous phrase no reader can approve ;  
Nor bombast, noise, or affectation love. 160  
In short, without pure language, what you write  
Can never yield us profit nor delight.  
Take time for thinking ; never work in haste ;  
And value not yourself for writing fast.  
A rapid poem, with such fury writ, 165  
Shew s want of judgment, not abounding wit.  
More pleas'd we are to see a river lead  
His gentle streams along a flowery mead,  
Than from high banks to hear loud torrents roar,  
With foamy waters on a muddy shore. 170  
Gently make haste, of labour not afraid :  
A hundred times consider what you've said :  
Polish, re-polish, every colour lay,  
And sometimes add, but oftener take away.  
'Tis not enough when swarming faults are writ, 175  
That here and there are scatter'd sparks of wit ;  
Each object must be fix'd in the due place,  
And differing parts have corresponding grace :  
Till, by a curious art dispos'd we find  
One perfect whole, of all the pieces join'd. 180  
Keep to your subject close in all you say ;  
Nor for a sounding sentence ever stray.  
The public censure for your writings fear,  
And to yourself be critic most severe.  
Fantastic wits their darling follies love ; 185  
But find you faithful friends that will approve,  
That on your works may look with careful eyes,  
And of your faults be zealous enemies :  
Lay by an author's pride and vanity,  
And from a friend a flatterer descry, 190  
Who seems to like, but means not what he says :  
Embrace true counsel, but suspect false praise.  
A sycophant will every thing admire :  
Each verse, each sentence, sets his soul on fire :  
All is divine ! there's not a word amiss ! 195  
He shakes with joy, and weeps with tenderness,



He overpowers you with his mighty praise.  
Truth never moves in those impetuous ways :  
A faithful friend is careful of your fame,  
And freely will your heedless errors blame ; 200  
He cannot pardon a neglected line,  
But verse to rule and order will confine.  
Reprove of words the too affected sound ;  
Here the sense flags, and your expression's round,  
Your fancy tires, and your discourse grows vain, 205  
Your terms improper, make them just and plain.  
Thus 'tis a faithful friend will freedom use ;  
But authors, partial to their darling Muse,  
Think to protect it they have just pretence,  
And at your friendly counsel take offence. 210  
Said you of this, that the expression's flat ?  
Your servant, Sir, you must excuse me that,  
He answers you. This word has here no grace,  
Pray leave it out : That, Sir's, the properest place.  
This turn I like not : 'Tis approv'd by all. 215  
Thus, resolute not from one fault to fall,  
If there's a syllable of which you doubt,  
'Tis a sure reason not to blot it out :  
Yet still he says you may his faults confute,  
And over him your power is absolute : 220  
But of his feign'd humility take heed ;  
'Tis a bait laid to make you hear him read.  
And when he leaves you happy in his Muse,  
Restless he runs some other to abuse,  
And often finds, for in our scribbling times 225  
No fool can want a sot to praise his rhymes :  
The flattest work has ever in the court  
Met with some zealous ass for its support :  
And in all times a forward scribbling fop  
Has found some greater fool to cry him up. 230



## CANTO II.

## PASTORAL.

**A**S a fair nymph, when rising from her bed,  
 With sparkling diamonds dresses not her head,  
 But, without gold or pearl, or costly scents,  
 Gathers from neighbouring fields her ornaments :  
 Such, lovely in its dress, but plain withal, 5  
 Ought to appear a perfect pastoral :  
 Its humble method nothing has of fierce,  
 But hates the rattling of a lofty verse :  
 There native beauty pleases, and excites,  
 And never with harsh sounds the ear affrights. 10  
 But in this style a poet often spent,  
 In rage throws by his rural instrument,  
 And vainly, when disorder'd thoughts abound,  
 Amidst the Eclogue makes the trumpet sound :  
 Pan flies alarm'd into the neighbouring woods, 15  
 And frightened nymphs dive down into the floods.  
 Oppos'd to this another, low in style,  
 Makes shepherds speak a language base and vile :  
 His writings flat and heavy, without sound,  
 Kissing the earth, and creeping on the ground ; 20  
 You'd swear that Randal, in his rustic strains,  
 Again was quavering to the country swains,  
 And changing, without care of sound or dress,  
 Strephon and Phyllis, into Tom and Bess.  
 'Twixt these extremes 'tis hard to keep the right ; 25  
 For guides take Virgil, and read Theocrite :  
 Be their just writing, by the Gods inspir'd,  
 Your constant pattern practis'd and admir'd.  
 By them alone you'll easily comprehend  
 How poets, without shame, may condescend 30  
 To sing of gardens, fields, of flowers, and fruit,  
 To stir up shepherds, and to tune the flute ;  
 Of love's rewards to tell the happy hour,  
 Daphne a tree, Narcissus made a flower,  
 And by what means the Eclogue yet has power 35  
 To make the woods worthy a conqueror :



This, of their writings, is the grace and flight;  
Their risings lofty, yet not out of sight.

## ELEGY.

The Elegy, that loves a mournful style,  
With unbound hair weeps at a funeral pile; 40  
It paints the lover's torments and delights,  
A mistress flatters, threatens, and invites:  
But well these raptures, if you'll make us see,  
You must know love as well as poetry.  
I hate those luke-warm authors, whose forc'd fire 45  
In a cold style describes a hot desire,  
That sigh by rule, and raging in cold blood  
Their sluggish muse whip to an amorous mood:  
Their transports feign'd appear but flat and vain;  
They always sigh, and always hug their chain, 50  
Adore their prison, and their sufferings bless,  
Make sense and reason quarrel as they please.  
'Twas not of old in this affected tone,  
That smooth Tibullus made his amorous moan;  
Nor Ovid, when instructed from above, 55  
By nature's rules he taught the art of love.  
The heart in Elegies forms the discourse,

## ODE.

The Ode is bolder, and has greater force,  
Mounting to heaven in her ambitious flight,  
Amongst the gods and heroes takes delight; 60  
Of Pisa's wrestlers tells the sinewy force,  
And sings the dusty conqueror's glorious course:  
To Simo's streams does fierce Achilles bring,  
And makes the Ganges bow to Britain's king.  
Sometimes she flies like an industrious bee, 65  
And robs the flowers by nature's chymistry,  
Describes the shepherd's dances, feasts, and blifs,  
And boasts from Phyllis to surprise a kifs,  
When gently she resists with feign'd remorse,  
That what she grants may seem to be by force. 70



Her generous style at random oft will part,  
 And, by a brave disorder, shews her art.  
 Unlike those fearful poets, whose cold rhyme  
 In all their raptures keeps exactest time,  
 That sing th' illustrious hero's mighty praise 75  
 (Lean Writers!) by the terms of weeks and days,  
 And dare not from least circumstances part,  
 But take all towns by strictest rules of art:  
 Apollo drives those fops from his abode;  
 And some have said that once the humorous god 80  
 Resolving all such scribblers to confound,  
 For the short sonnet order'd this strict bound:  
 Set rules for the just measure, and the time,  
 The easy running and alternate rhyme;  
 But, above all, those licences deny'd 85  
 Which in these writings the lame sense supply'd;  
 Forbad an useless line should find a place,  
 Or a repeated word appear with grace.  
 A faultless sonnet, finish'd thus, would be  
 Worth tedious volumes of loose poetry. 90  
 A hundred scribbling authors without ground,  
 Believe they have this only phoenix found:  
 When yet th' exactest scarce have two or three,  
 Among whole tomes from faults and censure free.  
 The rest but little read, regarded less, 95  
 Are shovel'd to the pastry from the press.  
 Closing the sense within the measur'd time,  
 'Tis hard to fit the reason to the rhyme.

## EPIGRAM.

The Epigram, with little art compos'd,  
 Is one good sentence in a distich clos'd. 100  
 These points, that by Italians first were priz'd,  
 Our ancient authors knew not, or despis'd:  
 The vulgar, dazzled with the glaring light,  
 To their false pleasures quickly they invite:  
 But public favour so increas'd their pride, 105  
 They overwhelm'd Parnassus with their tide.



The Madrigal at first was overcome,  
 And the proud Sonnet fell by the same doom;  
 With these grave Tragedy adorn'd her flights, 110  
 And mournful Elegy her funeral rites;  
 A hero never fail'd them on the stage,  
 Without his point a lover durst not rage;  
 The amorous shepherds took more care to prove  
 True to their point, than faithful to their love. 115  
 Each word like Janus had a double face:  
 And prose, as well as verse, allow'd it place:  
 The lawyer with conceits adorn'd his speech,  
 The parson without quibbling could not preach.  
 At last affronted Reason look'd about, 120  
 And from all serious matters shut them out:  
 Declar'd that none should use them without shame,  
 Except a scattering in the Epigram;  
 Provided that by art, and in due time,  
 They turn'd upon the thought, and not the rhyme. 125  
 Thus, in all parts, disorders did abate:  
 Yet quibblers in the court had leave to prate:  
 Insipid jesters, and unpleasant fools,  
 A corporation of dull punning drolls.  
 'Tis not, but that sometimes a dexterous muse 130  
 May with advantage a turn'd sense abuse,  
 And on a word may trifle with address;  
 But, above all, avoid the fond excess;  
 And think not, when your verse and sense are lame,  
 With a dull point to tag your epigram. 135

Each poem his perfection has apart;  
 The British round in plainness shews his art.  
 The ballad, though the pride of ancient time,  
 Has often nothing but his humorous rhyme;  
 The Madrigal may softer passions move, 140  
 And breathe the tender ecstasies of love.  
 Desire to shew itself, and not to wrong,  
 Arm'd Virtue first, with Satire in its tongue.



## SATIRE.

Lucillus was the man who, bravely bold,  
To Roman vices did this mirror hold, 145  
Protected humble goodness from reproach,  
Shew'd worth on foot, and rascals in the coach.  
Horace his pleasing wit to this did add,  
And none uncensur'd could be fool or mad:  
Unhappy was that wretch, whose name might be 150  
Squar'd to the rules of their sharp poetry.  
Persius obscure, but full of sense and wit,  
Affected brevity in all he writ:  
And Juvenal, learned as those times could be,  
Too far did stretch his sharp hyperbole; 155  
Though horrid truths through all his labours shine,  
In what he writes there's something of divine,  
Whether he blames the Caprean debauch,  
Or of Sejanus' fall tells the approach,  
Or that he makes the trembling senate come 160  
To the stern tyrant to receive their doom;  
Or Roman vice in coarsest habits shews,  
And paints an empress reeking from the stews:  
In all he writes appears a noble fire;  
To follow such a master then desire. 165  
Chaucer alone, fix'd on this solid base,  
In his old style conserves a modern grace:  
Too happy, if the freedom of his rhymes  
Offended not the method of our times.  
The Latin writers decency neglect, 170  
But modern authors challenge our respect,  
And at immodest writings take offence,  
If clean expression cover not the sense.  
I love sharp Satire, from obscenity free;  
Not impudence, that preaches modesty: 175  
Our English, who in malice never fail,  
Hence in lampoons and libels learn to rail;  
Pleasant detraction, that by singing goes  
From mouth to mouth, and as it marches grows:





As a fair Nymph when rising from her bed,  
With sparkling diamonds dresses not her head,  
But without Gold or Pearl, or costly scents,  
Gathers from neighbouring fields her ornaments.

*Wilde Day, Vol. III. Art of Poetry, Cantos 2 Line 164.*

*Drawn by R. Corbould. Engraved by C. Warren, for C. Cooke, Sept. 29. 1798.*



For the first time in my life  
I felt a sense of peace and joy  
as I walked through the fields  
and watched the sun set  
over the hills. I had never  
before felt so at ease, so  
free. The world seemed to  
be at my feet, and I was  
the master of it all. I had  
found my place, my home,  
and I was no longer a stranger.  
I was a part of it, a part  
of the great, beautiful world  
that was mine. I was  
home.



Our freedom in our poetry we see,  
That child of joy begot by liberty.  
But, vain blasphemers, tremble when you choose  
God for the subject of your impious muse :  
At last, those jests which libertines invent,  
Bring the lewd author to just punishment: 185  
Ev'n in a song there must be art and sense ;  
Yet sometimes we have seen, that wine, or chance,  
Have warm'd cold brains, and given dull writers mettle,  
And furnish'd out a scene for Mr. Settle.  
But for one lucky hit, that made thee please, 190  
Let not thy folly grow to a disease,  
Nor think thyself a wit ; for in our age  
If a warm fancy does some fop engage,  
He neither eats nor sleeps till he has writ,  
But plagues the world with his adulterate wit. 195  
Nay 'tis a wonder, if in his dire rage,  
He prints not his dull follies for the stage :  
And in the front of all his senseless plays,  
Makes David Logan crown his head with bayes. 199





## CANTO III.

## TRAGEDY.

**T**HERE's not a monster bred beneath the sky  
 But, well dispos'd by art, may please the eye :  
 A curious workman, by his skill divine,  
 From an ill object makes a good design.  
 Thus, to delight us, tragedy, in tears 5  
 For Oedipus, provokes our hopes and fears :  
 For parricide Orestes asks relief ;  
 And to increase our pleasure causes grief.  
 You then that in this noble art would rise,  
 Come ; and in lofty verse dispute the prize. 10  
 Would you upon the stage acquire renown,  
 And for your judges summon all the town ?  
 Would you your words for ever should remain,  
 And after ages past be fought again ?  
 In all you write, observe with care and art 15  
 To move the passions, and incline the heart.  
 If in a labour'd act, the pleasing rage  
 Cannot our hopes and fears by turns engage,  
 Nor in our mind a feeling pity raise,  
 In vain with learned scenes you fill your plays ; 20  
 Your cold discourse can never move the mind  
 Of a stern critic, naturally unkind ;  
 Who, justly tir'd with your pedantic flight,  
 Or falls asleep, or censures all you write.  
 The secret is, attention first to gain, 25  
 To move our minds, and then to entertain :  
 That, from the very opening of the scenes,  
 The first may shew us what the author means.  
 I'm tir'd to see an actor on the stage,  
 That knows not whether he's to laugh or rage ; 30  
 Who, an intrigue unraveling in vain,  
 Instead of pleasing, keeps my mind in pain.  
 I'd rather much the nauseous dunce should say  
 Downright, My name is Hector in the play ;



Than with a mass of miracles ill-join'd, 35  
Confound my ears, and not instruct my mind.  
The subject's never soon enough express'd ;  
Your place of action must be fix'd, and rest.  
A Spanish poet may with good event,  
In one day's space whole ages represent ; 40  
There oft the hero of a wandering stage  
Begins a child, and ends the play of age :  
But we that are by reason's rules confin'd,  
Will, that with art the poem be design'd.  
That unity of action, time, and place, 45  
Keep the stage full, and all our labours grace.  
Write not what cannot be with ease conceiv'd ;  
Some truths may be too strong to be believ'd.  
A foolish wonder cannot entertain :  
My mind's not mov'd if your discourse be vain. 50  
You may relate what would offend the eye :  
Seeing, indeed, would better satisfy ;  
But there are objects that a curious art  
Hides from the eyes, yet offers to the heart.  
The mind is most agreeably surpris'd, 55  
When a well-woven subject, long disguis'd,  
You on a sudden artfully unfold,  
And give the whole another face and mould.  
At first the tragedy was void of art ;  
A song ; where each man danc'd and sung his part ; 60  
And of God Bacchus roaring out the praise,  
Sought a good vintage for the jolly days :  
Then wine and joy were seen in each man's eyes,  
And a fat goat was the best singer's prize.  
Thespis was first, who, all he smear'd with lee, 65  
Began this pleasure for posterity :  
And with his carted actors, and a song,  
Amus'd the people as he pass'd along.  
Next Æschylus the different persons plac'd,  
And with a better mask his players grac'd : 70  
Upon a theatre his verse express'd,  
And show'd his hero with a buskin dress'd.  
Then Sophocles, the genius of his age,  
Increas'd the pomp and beauty of the stage,



Engag'd the chorus song in every part, 75  
And polish'd rugged verse by rules of art :  
He, in the Greek, did those perfections gain,  
Which the weak Latin never could attain,  
Our pious fathers, in their priest-rid age,  
As impious and profane, abhor'd the stage : 80  
A troop of silly pilgrims, as 'tis said,  
Foolishly zealous, scandalously play'd,  
Instead of heroes, and of love's complaints,  
The angels, God, the virgin, and the saints.  
At last, right reason did his laws reveal, 85  
And shew'd the folly of their ill plac'd zeal;  
Silenc'd those nonconformists of the age,  
And rais'd the lawful heroes of the stage :  
Only th' Athenian mask was laid aside,  
And chorus by the music was supply'd. 90  
Ingenious Love, inventive in new arts,  
Mingled in plays, and quickly touch'd our hearts :  
This passion never could resistance find,  
But knows the shortest passage to the mind.  
Paint then, I'm pleas'd my hero be in love ; 95  
But let him not like a tame shepherd move ;  
Let not Achilles be like Thyrsis seen,  
Or, for a Cyrus, shew an Artaben ;  
That struggling oft his passions we may find,  
The frailty, not the virtue of his mind. 100  
Of romance heroes shun the low design ;  
Yet to great arts some human frailties join :  
Achilles must with Homer's heart engage ;  
For an affront I'm pleas'd to see him rage.  
Those little failings in your hero's heart, 105  
Shew that of man and nature he has part :  
To leave known rules you cannot be allow'd ;  
Make Agamemnon covetous and proud ;  
Æneas in religious rights austere ;  
Keep to each man his proper character. 110  
Of countries, and of times, the humours know ;  
From different climates different customs grow :  
And strive to shun their fault who vainly dress  
An antique hero like some modern ass ;



Who make old Romans like our English move, 115  
Shew Cato sparkish, or make Brutus love,  
In a romance, those errors are excus'd :  
There 'tis enough that, reading, we're amus'd :  
Rules too severe would there be useless found ;  
But the strict scene must have a juster bound : 120  
Exact decorum we must always find,  
If then you form some hero in your mind,  
Be sure your image with itself agree ;  
For what he first appears, he still must be.  
Affected wits will naturally incline 125  
To paint their figures by their own design :  
Your bully poets, bully heroes write :  
Chapman in Bussy d'Ambois took delight,  
And thought perfection was to huff and fight.  
Wise nature, by variety does please ; 130  
Clothe differing passions in a differing dress :  
Bold Anger, in rough haughty words appears ;  
Sorrow is humble, and dissolves in tears.  
Make not your Hecuba with fury rage,  
And shew a ranting grief upon the stage ; 135  
Or tell in vain how the rough Tanais bore  
His seven-fold waters to the Euxine shore ;  
These swoln expressions, this affected noise,  
Shews like some pedant that declaims to boys.  
In sorrow you must softer methods keep ; 140  
And, to excite our tears, yourself must weep.  
Those noisy words with which ill plays abound,  
Come not from hearts that are in sadness drown'd.  
The theatre for a young poet's rhymes  
Is a bold venture in our knowing times ; 145  
An author cannot easily purchase fame ;  
Critics are always apt to hiss and blame :  
You may be judg'd by every ass in town,  
The privilege is bought for half-a-crown.  
To please, you must a hundred changes try ; 150  
Sometimes be humble, then must soar on high :  
In noble thoughts must every where abound,  
Be easy, pleasant, solid, and profound :



To these you must surprising touches join,  
 And shew us a new wonder in each line : 155  
 That all, in a just method well-design'd,  
 May leave a strong impression in the mind.  
 These are the arts that tragedy maintain :

## THE EPIC.

But the heroic claims a loftier strain.  
 In the narration of some great design, 160  
 Invention, art, and fable, all must join :  
 Here fiction must employ its utmost grace ;  
 All must assume a body, mind, and face :  
 Each virtue a divinity is seen ;  
 Prudence is Pallas, beauty Paphos' Queen. 165  
 'Tis not a cloud from whence swift lightnings fly ;  
 But Jupiter, that thunders from the sky :  
 Nor a rough storm that gives the sailor pain ;  
 But angry Neptune plowing up the main :  
 Echoe's no more an empty airy sound ; 170  
 But a fair nymph that weeps her lover drown'd.  
 Thus in the endless treasure of his mind,  
 The poet does a thousand figures find,  
 Around the work his ornaments he pours,  
 And strews with lavish hand his opening flowers, 175  
 'Tis not a wonder if a tempest bore  
 The Trojan fleet against the Libyan shore ;  
 From faithless fortune this is no surprise,  
 For ev'ry day 'tis common to our eyes ;  
 But angry Juno, that she might destroy, 180  
 And overwhelm the rest of ruin'd Troy :  
 That Æolus with the fierce goddess join'd,  
 Open'd the hollow prisons of the wind ;  
 Till angry Neptune looking o'er the main,  
 Rebukes the tempest, calms the waves again, 185  
 Their vessels from the dangerous quicksands steers ;  
 These are the springs that move our hopes and fears ;  
 Without these ornaments before our eyes,  
 Th' unfinew'd poem languishes and dies :



Your poet, in his art, will always fail,  
And tell you but a dull insipid tale.  
In vain have our mistaken authors try'd  
To lay these ancient ornaments aside,  
Thinking our God, and prophets that he sent,  
Might act like those the poets did invent, 195  
To fright poor readers in each line with hell,  
And talk of Satan, Ashtaroth, and Bel;  
The mysteries which Christians must believe,  
Disdain such shifting pageants to receive:  
The gospel offers nothing to our thoughts 200  
But penitence, or punishment for faults;  
And mingling falsehoods with those mysteries,  
Would make our sacred truths appear like lies.  
Besides, what pleasure can it be to hear  
The howlings of repining Lucifer, 205  
Whose rage at your imagin'd hero flies,  
And oft with God himself disputes the prize?  
Tasso, you'll say, has done it with applause?  
It is not here I mean to judge his cause:  
Yet though our age has so extoll'd his name, 210  
His works had never gain'd immortal fame,  
If holy Godfrey, in his ecstacies,  
Had only conquer'd Satan on his knees;  
If Tancred and Armida's pleasing form  
Did not his melancholy theme adorn. 215  
'Tis not, that Christian poems ought to be  
Fill'd with the fictions of idolatry;  
But in a common subject to reject  
The gods, and heathen ornaments neglect;  
To banish Tritons, who the seas invade, 220  
To take Pan's whistle, or the Fates degrade,  
To hinder Charon in his leaky boat,  
To pass the shepherd with the man of note,  
Is with vain scruples to disturb your mind,  
And search perfection you can never find: 225  
As well they may forbid us to present  
Prudence or justice for an ornament,  
To paint old Janus with his front of brass,  
And take from time his scythe, his wings and glass.



And ev'ry where, as 'twere idolatry, 230  
Banish descriptions from our poetry.  
Leave them their pious follies to pursue ;  
But let our reason such vain fears subdue :  
And let us not, amongst our vanities,  
Of the true God create a God of lies. 235  
In fable we a thousand pleasures see,  
And the smooth names seem made for poetry ;  
As Hector, Alexander, Helen, Phyllis,  
Ulysses, Agamemnon, and Achilles :  
In such a crowd the poet were to blame 240  
To choose king Chilperic for his hero's name.  
Sometimes the name being well or ill apply'd,  
Will the whole fortune of your work decide.  
Would you your reader never should be tir'd ?  
Choose some great hero, fit to be admir'd ; 245  
In courage signal, and in virtue bright,  
Let e'en his very failings give delight ;  
Let his great actions our attention bind,  
Like Cæsar, or like Scipio, frame his mind,  
And not like Oedipus his perjur'd race ; 250  
A common conqueror is a theme too base.  
Choose not your tale of accidents too full ;  
Too much variety may make it dull :  
Achilles' rage alone, when wrought with skill,  
Abundantly does a whole Iliad fill. 255  
Be your narrations lively, short, and smart :  
In your descriptions shew your noblest art :  
There 'tis your poetry may be employ'd :  
Yet you must trivial accidents avoid.  
Nor imitate that fool, who, to describe 260  
The wondrous marches of the chosen tribe,  
Plac'd on the sides to see their armies pass,  
The fishes staring through the liquid glass ;  
Describ'd a child, who, with his little hand,  
Pick'd up the shining pebbles from the sand. 265  
Such objects are too mean to stay our sight ;  
Allow your work a just and nobler flight.  
Be your beginning plain ; and take good heed  
Too soon you mount not on the airy steed ;



Nor tell your reader in a thundering verse,  
"I sing the conqueror of the universe."

270

What can an author after this produce?

The labouring mountain must bring forth a mouse.

Much better are we pleas'd with his address,

Who, without making such vast promises,

275

Says, in an easier style, and plainer sense,

"I sing the combats of that pious prince

"Who from the Phrygian coast his armies bore,

"And landed first on the Lavinian shore."

His opening muse sets not the world on fire,

280

And yet performs more than we can require:

Quickly you'll hear him celebrate the fame

And future glory of the Roman name;

Of Styx and Acheron describe the floods,

And Cæsar's wandering in th' Elysian woods:

285

With figures numberless his story grace,

And every thing in beauteous colours trace.

At once you may be pleasing and sublime:

I hate a heavy melancholy rhyme:

I'd rather read Orlando's comic tale,

290

Than a dull author always stiff and stale,

Who thinks himself dishonour'd in his style,

If on his works the Graces do but smile.

'Tis said, that Homer, matchless in his art,

Stole Venus' girdle to engage the heart:

295

His works indeed vast treasures do unfold,

And whatsoe'er he touches turns to gold:

All in his hands new beauty does acquire;

He always pleases, and can never tire.

A happy warmth he every where may boast;

300

Nor is he in too long digressions lost:

His verses without rule a method find,

And of themselves appear in order join'd:

All without trouble answers his intent;

Each syllable is tending to th' event.

305

Let his example your endeavours raise:

To love his writings is a kind of praise.

A poem, where we all perfections find,  
Is not the work of a fantastic mind:



There must be care, and time, and skill, and pains ;  
 Not the first heat of unexperienc'd brains, 311  
 Yet sometimes artless poets, when the rage  
 Of a warm fancy does their minds engage,  
 Puff'd with vain pride, presume they understand,  
 And boldly take the trumpet in their hand ; 315  
 Their fustian Muse each accident confounds ;  
 Nor can she fly, but rise by leaps and bounds,  
 Till, their small stock of learning quickly spent,  
 Their poem dies for want of nourishment.  
 In vain mankind the hot-brain'd fool decries, 320  
 No branding censures can unveil his eyes ;  
 With impudence the laurel they invade,  
 Resolv'd to like the monsters they have made.  
 Virgil, compar'd to them, is flat and dry ;  
 And Homer understood not poetry : 325  
 Against their merit if this age rebel,  
 To future times for justice they appeal.  
 But waiting till mankind shall do them right,  
 And bring their works triumphantly to light ;  
 Neglected heaps we in by-corners lay, 330  
 Where they become to worms and moths a prey :  
 Forgot, in dust and cobwebs let them rest,  
 Whilst we return from whence we first digrest.  
 The great success which tragic writers found,  
 In Athens first the comedy renown'd, 335  
 Th' abusive Grecian there, by pleasing ways,  
 Dispers'd his natural malice in his plays :  
 Wisdom and virtue, honour, wit, and sense,  
 Were subject to buffooning insolence :  
 Poets were publicly approv'd, and sought, 340  
 That vice extoll'd, and virtue set at nought !  
 A Socrates himself, in that loose age,  
 Was made the pastime of a scoffing stage,  
 At last the public took in hand the cause,  
 And cur'd this madness by the power of laws ; 345  
 Forbad at any time, or any place,  
 To name the person, or describe the face.  
 The stage, its ancient fury thus let fall,  
 And comedy diverted without gall.



By mild reproofs recover'd minds diseas'd, 350  
 And sparing persons innocently pleas'd.  
 Each one was nicely shewn in this new glass,  
 And smil'd to think he was not meant the ass :  
 A miser oft would laugh at first, to find  
 A faithful draught of his own sordid mind ; 355  
 And fops were with such care and cunning writ,  
 They lik'd the piece for which themselves did sit.  
 You then that would the comic laurels wear,  
 To study nature be your only care :  
 Whoe'er knows man, and by a curious art 360  
 Discerns the hidden secrets of the heart ;  
 He who observes, and naturally can paint  
 The jealous fool, the fawning sycophant,  
 A sober wit, an enterprising ass,  
 A humorous Otter, or a Hudibras ; 365  
 May safely in those noble lists engage,  
 And make them act and speak upon the stage.  
 Strive to be natural in all you write,  
 And paint with colours that may please the sight.  
 Nature in various figures does abound ; 370  
 And in each mind are different honours found :  
 A glance, a touch, discovers to the wise ;  
 But every man has not discerning eyes.  
 All-changing time does also change the mind ;  
 And different ages different pleasures find : 375  
 Youth, hot and furious, cannot brook delay,  
 By flattering vice is easily led away ;  
 Vain in discourse, inconstant in desire,  
 In censure rash, in pleasures all on fire.  
 The manly age does steadier thoughts enjoy ; 380  
 Power and ambition do his soul employ :  
 Against the turns of fate he sets his mind ;  
 And by the past the future hopes to find.  
 Decrepit age still adding to his stores,  
 For other heaps the treasure he adores, 385  
 In all his actions keeps a frozen pace ;  
 Past times extols, the present to debase :  
 Incapable of pleasures youth abuse,  
 In others blames what age does him refuse.



Your actors must by reason be controll'd : 390  
 Let young men speak like young, old men like old :  
 Observe the town, and study well the court :  
 For thither various characters resort :  
 Thus 'twas great Jonson purchas'd his renown,  
 And in his art had borne away the crown ; 395  
 If, less desirous of the people's praise,  
 He had not with low farce debas'd his plays ;  
 Mixing dull buffoonery with wit refin'd,  
 And Harlequin with noble Terence join'd.  
 When in the Fox I see the tortoise hist, 400  
 I lose the author of the Alchemist.  
 The comic wit, born with a smiling air,  
 Must tragic grief and pompous verse forbear ;  
 Yet may he not, as on a market-place,  
 With bawdy jests amuse the populace : 405  
 With well-bred conversation you must please,  
 And your intrigue unravell'd be with ease :  
 Your action still should reason's rules obey,  
 Nor in an empty scene may lose its way.  
 Your humble style must sometimes gently rise ; 410  
 And your discourse sententious be, and wise :  
 The passions must to nature be confin'd ;  
 And scenes to scenes with artful weaving join'd.  
 Your wit must not unseasonably play ;  
 But follow bus'ness, never lead the way. 415  
 Observe how Terence does this error shun ;  
 A careful father chides his amorous son :  
 Then see that son, whom no advice can move,  
 Forget those orders, and pursue his love :  
 'Tis not a well-drawn picture we discover ; 420  
 'Tis a true son, a father, and a lover.  
 I like an author that reforms the age,  
 And keeps the right decorum of the stage ;  
 That always pleases by just reason's rule :  
 But for a tedious droll, a quibbling fool, 425  
 Who with low nauseous bawdry fills his plays ;  
 Let him begone, and on two treffels raise  
 Some Smithfield stage, where he may act his pranks,  
 And make Jack-Puddings speak to Mountebanks. 429



## CANTO IV.

**I**N Florence dwelt a doctor of renown,  
 The scourge of God, and terror of the town,  
 Who all the cant of physic had by heart,  
 And never murdered but by rules of art:  
 The public mischief was his private gain ; 5  
 Children their slaughter'd parents sought in vain ;  
 A brother here his poison'd brother wept ;  
 Some bloodless dy'd, and some by opium slept.  
 Colds, at his presence, would to frenzies turn ;  
 And agues, like malignant fevers, burn. 10  
 Hated, at last, his practice gives him o'er ;  
 One friend, unkill'd by drugs, of all his store,  
 In his new country-house affords him place ;  
 'Twas a rich abbot, and a building ass :  
 Here first the doctor's talent came in play ; 15  
 He seems inspir'd, and talks like Wren or May :  
 Of this new portico condemns the face,  
 And turns the entrance to a better place ;  
 Designs the stair-case at the other end,  
 His friend approves, does for his mason send. 20  
 He comes ; the doctor's arguments prevail.  
 In short, to finish this our humorous tale,  
 He Galen's dangerous science does reject,  
 And from ill doctor turns good architect.  
 In this example we may have our part : 25  
 Rather be mason : 'tis a useful art !  
 Than a dull poet ; for that trade, accurst,  
 Admits no mean betwixt the best and worst.  
 In other sciences, without disgrace,  
 A candidate may fill a second place ; 30  
 But poetry no medium can admit,  
 No reader suffers an indifferent wit :  
 The ruin'd stationers against him bawl,  
 And Herringham degrades him from his stall  
 Burlesque, at least, our laughter may excite : 35  
 But a cold writer never can delight.



The Counter-Scuffle has more wit and art,  
Than the stiff formal style of Gondibert.  
Be not affected with that empty praise  
Which your vain flatterers will sometimes raise, 40  
And when you read, with ecstasy will say,  
“The finish’d piece! the admirable play!”  
Which, when expos’d to censure and to light,  
Cannot endure a critic’s piercing sight.  
A hundred authors fates have been foretold, 45  
And Shadwell’s works are printed, but not sold.  
Hear all the world; consider every thought;  
A fool by chance may stumble on a fault:  
Yet, when Apollo does your Muse inspire,  
Be not impatient to expose your fire; 50  
Nor imitate the Settles of our times,  
Those tuneful readers of their own dull rhymes.  
Who seize on all th’ acquaintance they can meet,  
And stop the passengers that walk the street:  
There is no sanctuary you can choose 55  
For a defence from their pursuing Muse.  
I’ve said before, be patient when they blame;  
To alter for the better is no shame.  
Yet yield not to a fool’s impertinence:  
Sometimes conceited sceptics, void of sense, 60  
By their false taste condemn some finish’d part,  
And blame the noblest flights of wit and art,  
In vain their fond opinions you deride,  
With their lov’d follies they are satisfy’d;  
And their weak judgment, void of sense and light, 65  
Thinks nothing can escape their feeble sight:  
Their dangerous counsels do not cure, but wound;  
To shun the storm, they run your verse aground,  
And, thinking to escape a rock, are drown’d.  
Choose a sure judge to censure what you write, 70  
Whose reason leads, and knowledge gives you light,  
Whose steady hand will prove your faithful guide,  
And touch the darling follies you would hide:  
He, in your doubts, will carefully advise,  
And clear the mist before your feeble eyes. 75



'Tis he will tell you, to what noble height  
 A generous Muse may sometimes take her flight ;  
 When too much fetter'd with the rules of art,  
 May from her stricter bounds and limits part :  
 But such a perfect judge is hard to see,  
 And every rhymers knows not poetry ;  
 Nay some there are, for writing verse extoll'd,  
 Who know not Lucan's dross from Virgil's gold.

80

Would you in this great art acquire renown ?  
 Authors, observe the rules I here lay down. 85  
 In prudent lessons every where abound ;  
 With pleasant join the useful and the sound :  
 A sober reader a vain tale will flight :  
 He seeks as well instruction as delight.  
 Let all your thoughts to virtue be confin'd, 90  
 Still offering nobler figures to our mind :  
 I like not those loose writers who employ  
 Their guilty Muse, good manners to destroy ;  
 Who with false colours still deceive our eyes,  
 And shew us vice dress'd in a fair disguise. 95  
 Yet do I not their sullen Muse approve,  
 Who from all modest writings banish love :  
 That strip the play-house of its chief intrigue,  
 And make a murderer of Roderigue :  
 The lightest love, if decently exprest, 100  
 Will raise no vicious motions in our breast.  
 Dido in vain may weep, and ask relief ;  
 I blame her folly whilst I share her grief.  
 A virtuous author, in his charming art,  
 To please the sense needs not corrupt the heart ; 105  
 His heat will never cause a guilty fire :  
 To follow virtue then be your desire.  
 In vain your art and vigour are exprest ;  
 The obscene expression shews th' infected breast.  
 But above all base jealousies avoid, 110  
 In which detracting poets are employ'd.  
 A noble wit dares liberally contend ;  
 And scorns to grudge at his deserving friend.  
 Base rivals, who true wit and merit hate,  
 Caballing still against it with the great, 115



Maliciously aspire to gain renown,  
By standing up, and pulling others down.  
Never debase yourself by treacherous ways,  
Nor by such abject methods seek for praise :  
Let not your only business be to write ; 120  
Be virtuous, just, and in your friends delight.

'Tis not enough your poems be admir'd ;  
But strive your conversation be desir'd :  
Write for immortal fame ; nor ever choose  
Gold for the object of a generous Muse. 125

I know a noble wit may, without crime,  
Receive a lawful tribute for his time ;  
Yet I abhor those writers, who despise  
Their honour ; and alone their profits prize ;  
Who their Apollo basely will degrade, 130  
And of a noble science make a trade.

Before kind Reason did her light display,  
And government taught morals to obey,  
Men, like wild beasts, did nature's laws pursue,  
They fed on herbs, and drink from rivers drew ; 135  
Their brutal force, on lust and rapine bent,  
Committed murder without punishment ;  
Reason at last, by her all-conquering arts,  
Reduc'd these savages, and turn'd their hearts ;  
Mankind from bogs, and woods, and caverns calls,  
And towns and cities fortifies with walls : 141  
Thus fear of Justice made proud Rapine cease,  
And shelter'd Innocence by laws and peace.

These benefits from poets we receiv'd, 144  
From whence are rais'd these fictions since believ'd.

That Orpheus, by his soft harmonious strains,  
Tam'd the fierce tigers of the Thracian plains ;  
Amphion's notes, by their melodious powers,  
Drew rocks and woods, and rais'd the Theban towers ;  
These miracles from numbers did arise : 150

Since which, in verse heaven taught his mysteries,  
And by a priest, possess'd with rage divine,  
Apollo spoke from his prophetic shrine.  
Soon after Homer the old heroes prais'd,  
And noble minds by great examples rais'd ; 155



Then Hesiod did his Grecian swains incline  
To till the fields, and prune the bounteous vine.  
Thus useful rules were by the poets' aid,  
In easy numbers to rude men convey'd,  
And pleasingly their precepts did impart ; 160  
First charm'd the ear, and then engag'd the heart :  
The Muses thus their reputation rais'd,  
And with just gratitude in Greece were prais'd.  
With pleasure mortals did their wonders see,  
And sacrificed to their divinity ; 165  
But want, at last, base flattery entertain'd,  
And old Parnassus with this vice was stain'd :  
Desire of gain dazzling the poets' eyes,  
Their works were filled with fulsome flatteries.  
Thus needy wits a vile revenue made, 170  
And verse became a mercenary trade.  
Debase not with so mean a vice thy art :  
If gold must be the idol of thy heart,  
Fly, fly, th' unfruitful Heliconian strand,  
Those streams are not enrich'd with golden sand : 175  
Great wits, as well as warriors, only gain  
Laurels and honours for their toil and pain :  
But what ? an author cannot live on fame,  
Or pay a reckoning with a lofty name :  
A poet to whom fortune is unkind, 180  
Who when he goes to bed has hardly din'd ;  
Takes little pleasure in Parnassus' dreams,  
Or relishes the Heliconian streams.  
Horace had ease and plenty when he writ,  
And free from cares for money or for meat, 185  
Did not expect his dinner from his wit.  
'Tis true ; but verse is cherish'd by the great,  
And now none famish who deserve to eat ;  
What can we fear, when virtue, arts, and sense,  
Receive the stars propitious influence ; 190  
When a sharp-sighted prince, by early grants,  
Rewards your merits, and prevents your wants ?  
Sing then his glory, celebrate his fame ;  
Your noblest theme is his immortal name.



Let mighty Spenser raise his reverend head, 195  
 Cowley and Denham start up from the dead ;  
 Waller his age renew, and offerings bring,  
 Our monarch's praise let bright-ey'd virgins sing ;  
 Let Dryden with new rules our stage refine,  
 And his great models form by this design : 200  
 But where's a second Virgil to rehearse  
 Our hero's glories in his epic verse ?  
 What Orpheus sing his triumphs o'er the main,  
 And make the hills and forests move again ;  
 Shew his bold fleet on the Batavian shore, 205  
 And Holland trembling as his cannons roar ;  
 Paint Europe's balance in his steady hand,  
 Whilst the two worlds in expectation stand  
 Of peace or war, that wait on his command ?  
 But as I speak new glories seize my eyes, 210  
 Glories, which heaven itself does give, and prize,  
 Blessings of peace, that with her milder rays,  
 Adorn his reign, and bring Saturnian days :  
 Now let rebellion, discord, vice, and rage,  
 That have in patriots forms debauch'd our age, 215  
 Vanish with all the ministers of hell :  
 His rays their poisonous vapours shall dispel ;  
 'Tis he alone our safety did create,  
 His own firm soul secur'd the nation's fate,  
 Oppos'd to all the Bout'feus of the state, 220  
 Authors, for him your great endeavours raise ;  
 The loftiest numbers will but reach his praise.  
 For me, whose verse in satire has been bred,  
 And never durst heroic measures tread ;  
 Yet you shall see me in that famous field, 225  
 With eyes and voice, my best assistance yield ;  
 Offer your lessons, that my infant Muse  
 Learnt, when she Horace for her guide did choose :  
 Second your zeal with wishes, heart, and eyes,  
 And afar hold up the glorious prize. 230  
 But pardon too, if, zealous for the right,  
 A strict observer of each noble flight,  
 From the fine gold I separate the allay,  
 And shew how hasty writers sometimes stray :



Apter to blame, than knowing how to mend;  
A sharp, but yet necessary friend.

236

## VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS,

## PARAPHRASED.

**C**REATOR Spirit! by whose aid  
The world's foundations first were laid;  
Come visit ev'ry pious mind,  
Come pour thy joys on humankind;  
From sin and sorrow set us free,  
And make thy temples worthy thee.

5

O source of uncreated light!  
The Father's promis'd Paraclete;  
Thrice Holy Fount! thrice Holy Fire!  
Our hearts with heav'nly love inspire;  
Come, and thy sacred unction bring  
To sanctify us while we sing.

10

Plenteous of grace, descend from high,  
Rich in thy sev'nfold energy!  
Thou strength of his Almighty hand,  
Whose pow'r does heav'n and earth command;  
Proceeding Spirit, our defence,  
Who dost the gift of tongues dispense,  
And crown'st thy gift with eloquence!

15

Refine and purge our earthly parts;  
But, oh! inflame and fire our hearts!  
Our frailties help, our vice control,  
Submit the senses to the soul;  
And when rebellious they are grown,  
Then lay thy hand, and hold 'em down.

20

25

Chase from our minds th'infernal foe,  
And peace, the fruit of love, bestow;  
And, lest our feet should step astray,  
Protect, and guide us in the way.

Make us eternal truths receive,  
And practise all that we believe;  
Give us thyself, that we may see  
The Father, and the Son, by thee.

30



Immortal honour, endless fame,  
Attend th' Almighty Father's name:  
The Saviour Son be glorified,  
Who for lost man's redemption dy'd;  
And equal adoration be,  
Eternal Paraclete! to thee.

35

39

THE END.





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The



The Octo-decimo Size in all the works, being invariably adhered to, the Library, therefore, appears with that **UNIFORM ELEGANCE** which a collection of Volumes of promiscuous sizes cannot exhibit; and the Volumes, from their uniformity, are infinitely more decorative to the Library than an arrangement in the promiscuous sizes of Quarto, Octavo, Duo-decimo, &c. This size is also more commodious than the Octavo or Duo-decimo, which are too large and ponderous for the pocket, and calculated more for works of Science than Amusement.

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The above Works of the *Poets*, as also those enumerated in the Catalogue of the *Novels* and *Sacred Classics*, will be followed by others of *equal Estimation*, as none will gain admission into this Library but such as have been stamped with universal Approbation.

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The Design of this Undertaking is to present to the Public, under the Title of the SACRED CLASSICS, a Collection of the most ESTEEMED Works on MORAL and RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS, written by Authors of known Celebrity, and happily adapted to form the Mind to the Love and Practice of Piety and Virtue. The Writings of the Authors we have selected for this Purpose, tend to convey both Instruction and Entertainment; some of them exhibit Examples of Virtue to attract Admiration; others Instances of Vice to excite Abhorrence; and all of them abound with exalted Sentiments and apposite Allusions; and thereby contribute to impart knowledge of the most important and interesting nature.

In an age of Erudition and free Enquiry, it must give a sensible pleasure to reflecting Minds to see Instruction mingled with Amusement, and the most serious and important Truths introduced to our notice in the garb of Pleasure and Entertainment.

As the utility of the Sacred Classics must be evident, not only as they relate to Persons in general, but the Rising Generation in particular; a consideration which must recommend them to Parents, Guardians, and Superintendants of Seminaries of Learning, as peculiarly adapted to animate at once the progress of youth, in their religious and literary pursuits, by introducing the opinions of the best and wisest men,



men, upon the most important subjects of Religion, at a small expence; and as they tend so essentially to promote the Christian Cause, and interest and happiness of Society, they deserve every possible recommendation from those who are anxious for the advancement of Piety and Virtue; nor has there been any collection of Moral and Religious Works yet published, so well adapted to accomplish this important end; for, by means of this cheap and elegant, yet close method of printing the Sacred Classics, we are able to produce such valuable and expensive Books to people of every line of life, as have hitherto, from the enormous expence attached to them, been in the hands of few; though, from the Importance and Value of the Subjects, they ought to be the companions of every Christian Reader. The Proprietor has a peculiar satisfaction in laying before the Public, Works, at a reduced price, which tend not only to amuse but instruct, and thereby serve both as a source of entertainment and incitement to Virtue. He therefore entertains the flattering expectation, that a work of such evident Utility will meet with Encouragement, when writings of much less importance are purchased with avidity. And to render this work as captivating as possible, the Proprietor has spared neither Pains nor Expence in the Execution and Embellishment of it, so that it embraces every advantage that can recommend it to the Curious in Printing, and the Admirers of ornamental Illustration; being decorated with all the Elegance that the Artist can devise, or the Printer display.

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| IDLER,              | GUARDIAN,   | CONNOISSEUR. |
| RAMBLER,            | SPECTATOR,  | WORLD.       |

This Work, in point of cheapness, is equal to the other Publications that are comprised in the POCKET LIBRARY, and their *unequalled Elegance*, on which the Proprietor rests his Claim to public Patronage, can only be known by inspecting the Numbers, which will prove an infinitely better Recommendation than any eulogium he can advance.

The Design of the Proprietor of this Work is to present to the Public, under the Title of the BRITISH CLASSICS, a succession of Essays, which, from their intrinsic merit, and the acknowledged abilities of their Authors, are stamped with universal approbation; not only as standards of the English Language, for purity and elegance of diction, but as impressive lessons for general conduct and deportment in life; as they teach its minuter decencies and duties; tend to regulate conversation; and correct those errors and follies which are ridiculous, though not criminal; and which, if they produce no lasting calamities, impress hourly vexation, and annoy the pleasures and happiness of society.

The utility of essay writing is so forcibly described by Dr. Johnson, that we shall introduce his ideas upon the subject in an extract from his works.

“ Before the *Tatler* and *Spectator* (if the writers for the Theatre are excepted) England had no masters of common life. No writers had yet undertaken to reform either the savageness of neglect, or the impertinence of civility; to teach when to speak, or to be silent; how to refuse, or how to comply. We wanted not books to teach us our more important duties, and to settle opinions in philosophy and politics; but an *Arbiter Elegantiarum*, a judge of propriety, was yet wanting, who should survey the track of daily conversation, and free it from those thorns and prickles which tease life's passenger, though they do not wound him. For this purpose there is not any means so proper as the frequent publications of short papers, which we read not as study, but amusement. If the subject be flight, the treatise likewise is short. The busy may find time, and the idle may find patience.” Mrs.



Mrs. Piozzi, in her anecdotes, speaking of Dr. Johnson's *Rambler*, has these words: "that ample repository of moral wisdom, and accurate criticism, breathes, indeed, the genuine emanations of its great Author's mind; expressed too in a style so natural to him, and so much like his common mode of conversing, that I was myself but little astonished, when he told me that he had scarcely read over one of those inimitable Essays, before they went to the press."

The serious papers in his *Idler*, if inferior to those in the *Rambler* in sublimity and splendor, are distinguished by the same instructive tendency, and lead to the same great end; of diffusing wisdom, virtue, and happiness. The humorous papers are light and lively, and wrote more in the manner of Addison. And, in order to be consistent with the assumed character, it is written in a style of ease and unlaboured elegance. It is the *Odyssey* after the *Iliad*. Intense thinking would not become the *Idler*. The first number presents a well-known portrait of an Idler, and from that character no deviation could be made. Accordingly, Johnson forgets his austere manner. He still continues his lectures upon human life; but adverts to common occurrences, and is often content with the topic of the day. Upon the whole, it is with great truth observed, that, as an essayist, his periodical papers are distinguished from those of other writers who derive celebrity from similar publications: and if he had neither the wit nor the graceful ease of Addison, nor the humour and classic suavity of Goldsmith, his powers were of a more grave, energetic, and dignified kind; and, if he entertains us less, he instructs us more.

Of Goldsmith's Essays, with which we shall commence our Publication, we deem the following extract from his life to be a sufficient recommendation. "Goldsmith," says Dr. Johnson, "was a man of such variety of powers, and such felicity of performance, that he seemed to excel in whatever he attempted; a man who had the art of being minute without tediousness, and general without confusion; whose language was capacious, without exuberance; exact, without restraint; and easy, without weakness."

Our space will not admit of entering into a particular detail of the other Works, which compose this Collection; nor is it necessary, as they are universally known, and their reputation has been so long established.













The Poetical Works of John Dryden

Bd.: 3.

[1798]

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